NEW SOUNDS, NEW STORIES

Narrativity in Contemporary Music

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New Sounds, New Stories

Narrativity in Contemporary Music

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Die Zeit ist das Element *der Erzählung, wie sie das element des Lebens ist, - unlösbar damit verbunden, wie mit den Körpern im Raum. Sie is auch das Element der Musik, als welche die Zeit mißt und gliedert, sie kurzweilig und kostbar auf einmal macht: verwandt hierin, wie gesagt, der Erzählung, die ebenfalls (und anders als das auf einmal leuchtend gegenwärtige und nur als Körper an die Zeit gebundene Werk der bildenden Kunst) nur als ein Nacheinander, nicht anders denn als ein Ablaufendes sich zu geben weiß, und selbst, wenn sie versuchen sollte, in jedem Augenblick ganz da zu sein, der Zeit zu ihrer Erscheinung bedarf.*

Thomas Mann, *Der Zauberberg* (1924)

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PREFACE

Although the world may not actually be made up of stories, it can be said that, as soon as there are people, there are stories. As is argued by theorists such as David Herman (2003b), human beings have a basic inclination to interpret the world around them in a narrative manner. Narrative, i.e. the representation of a temporal development, which consists of a succession of events, is an aspect of many things that are encountered in life. Therefore, these theorists argue, narratives are paramount in order to grasp the world in which the human subject lives.

Since music is a temporal cultural expression, it would seem to make sense to assume that music has a narrative aspect as well. Nevertheless, the notion of musical narrativity is highly disputed. And indeed, verbal narrative is able to represent many phenomena, ideas, and views that cannot be represented in music in the same straightforward manner. For instance, in verbal narrative it is possible to posit an unreliable narrator. A verbal narrative can represent a character's thoughts, or retell historical events. And music, because it lacks the referential qualities language has, is not capable of doing this. Therefore, as is argued by for instance Jean-Jacques Nattiez (1990) and Werner Wolf (2002), music cannot be narrative.

But is it really the case that none of these characteristics can be attributed to music? And if not, does that necessarily imply that music thus cannot be narrative? My contention is that music has more narrative traits than these critics assume. Moreover, I maintain that an object does not have to have the exact same characteristics a verbal narrative has in order to be considered as narrative. Rather, without specifying its medium, I define narrative as the representation of a temporal development. And I will assert that many musical works can be considered as narrative under this definition.

This approach differs from those applied by other theorists who understand music in narrative terms. Anthony Newcomb and Gregory Karl, for instance, focus on the concept of musical plot. Carolyn Abbate, on the other hand, emphasizes the notion of voice in those exceptional instances where she does acknowledge that music can be narrative. And although these conceptions have their merits, I hope to show that my approach allows for a more precise articulation of the nature and characteristics of musical narrativity.

In this study I primarily focus on the narrative analysis of contemporary, instrumental musical works, both acoustic, electro-acoustic, and electronic. Furthermore, the object of analysis is music as

it is performed, i.e. a specific performance of a particular work. As I will explain in chapter 2, each performance of the same (narrative) musical piece results in a new musical narrative. Consequently, in my analyses I always specify which performance, that is, which recording, of a musical piece is used as my object.[1] Nevertheless, in the case of acoustic musical compositions, I do include printed musical examples. For, apart from the joy that reading music might provide, the musical examples function as indices to specific musical moments that are discussed in the analysis. But bear in mind that the analyses in this study are not about these visual representations. The analyses are about the sounding music, of which the score is only an incomplete graphic abstraction. Besides being prescriptions for performance, scores necessarily are reductions of the object under analysis. As a consequence, I have refrained from providing printed examples entirely when electro-acoustic and electronic works are concerned, since, in these cases, the score is even more incomplete than those of acoustic works.

The reason why I have chosen to concentrate on the narrative aspect of contemporary music in particular is twofold. Firstly, in doing so, I am able to articulate narrativity in a precise manner. Since many contemporary musical works question or problematize the notion of musical narrativity, the analysis of these works might be the key to identifying the limits of musical narrativity. Thus, although the main focus is on contemporary instrumental music, the results obtained in this study hold for all music: instrumental and vocal, classical and popular, ancient and contemporary. Secondly, I argue that, in assuming a narrative listening stance, the listener's possibilities to comprehend contemporary music might be enriched.[2] As I remarked above, the inclination to interpret the world in a narrative manner is a basic disposition that human beings share. Therefore, I expect that listening to contemporary, atonal music while assuming a narrative listening stance might lead to a greater degree of comprehension of this kind of

[1] The choice of particular performances was determined both by pragmatic and canonical considerations. Of some compositions, namely those written by Helmut Lachenmann, Pierre Boulez, Stephen Vitiello, and Kaija Saariaho, there existed only one recording at the time of analysis. The recordings of György Ligeti's, Steve Reich's, and Karlheinz Stockhausen's pieces that I selected are regarded as reference performances. The recording of Morton Feldman's composition, lastly, was selected because it was the only one that was available to me at the time.

[2] Apropos the listener: whenever I mention the listener in this study, I do not refer to an empirical listener. Rather, the listener is defined analogous to the definition Ernst van Alphen gives of the "reader" (1988: 20-21): the "listener" is a function, the embodiment of listening and other cultural conventions. S/he is the center where listening conventions can be localized. Furthermore, a listener can assume several listening stances at the same time, or one after another, one of them being a narrative listening stance.

music, which is often regarded as ungraspable. It might enable the listener to follow the music, to make sense of it.

This narrative listening stance might be characterized as a form of anti-anti-structural listening. Just as György Ligeti's *Le Grand Macabre* (1978) can be considered as an "anti-anti-opera," i.e. a return to opera, but with a difference, after Mauricio Kagel's anti-opera *Staatstheater* (1971), narrative listening is a return to structural listening, but with a difference as well. In narrative listening, a sense of comprehension can be established through musical structuring, but the activity of structuring, as is done in narrative listening, differs in important respects from structural listening.

Structural listening, Rose Rosengard Subotnik states, is "[…] a method which concentrates attention primarily on the formal relationships established over the course of a single composition" (1996: 148). It tries "[…] to describe a process wherein the listener follows and comprehends the unfolding realization, with all its detailed inner relationships, of a generating musical conception" (150). Structural listening is a manner of listening in which comprehension of the music is realized by trying to establish relations within the music as it unfolds in time. Yet, in this kind of listening the listener does not try to establish just any relation, as Andrew Dell'Antonio notes:

> Structural listening strategies imply a model of one-to-one communication: the listener, in understanding the structural development of a musical text, is made privy to the composer's creative processes. Under this model, the composer's intentions are tied up with an individual's understanding of the unfolding of a musical work. (2004: 201)

Thus, according to Dell'Antonio, in the end structural listening is a manner of musical comprehension through the reconstruction of the composer's intentions.[3]

Moreover, Subotnik argues that

> [b]ased on an assumption that valid structural logic is accessible to any reasoning person, such structural listening discourages kinds of understanding that require culturally specific knowledge of things external to the compositional structure, such as conventional associations or theoretical systems. (1996: 150)

By focusing on compositional structures only, structures that exhibit some kind of logic which is supposed to be understood by any reasoning listener, other crucial aspects of musical experiences that are

[3] Theodor W. Adorno, one of the theorists who advocate the notion of structural listening, however, does not imply that structural listening equals the reconstruction of the composer's intentions. Thus, in this respect, Dell'Antonio's critique does not apply to Adorno.

not part of the music itself are neglected. At the same time, Subotnik continues, structural listening implies an impression of objectivity, "[…] a unifying principle [that] establish[es] the internal 'necessity' of a structure as tantamount to a guarantee of musical value" (159). Music is valuable when it exhibits a structural logic that establishes the internal necessity of the musical structure, a structural logic that is the result of the composer's creative processes.

In the collection of essays, entitled *Beyond Structural Listening? Postmodern Modes of Hearing* (2004), edited by Dell'Antonio, this manner of listening is criticized. In the afterword to this collection, Subotnik remarks that

> […] every contributor casts doubt, at some level, on the possibility and value of mastery as a concept within the framework of studying music. Here, perhaps, is a common link to my criticism of Structural Listening [sic], where many of the priorities I question, including a preoccupation with formal unity and an advocacy of stern formal attentiveness, have an affinity to ideals of mastery. In some instances in the present collection, writers reject the conception of the musical composition, even in the art tradition, as the outcome of a master's power to exercise total control. (2004: 289)

The contributors of *Beyond Structural Listening?* all take a more or less anti-structural stand; they devalue mastery of music to a certain extent, which is the central aim in structural listening. Furthermore, the composer's ability to control and determine the listening experience is toned down. "Most music has never aspired to the autonomy demanded in the model of structural listening, and so it must be consigned to a lesser position," Mitchell Morris (2004: 49), one of the contributors, remarks. Yet, he does not reject structural listening entirely, for he adds that "[i]t is better […] to imagine structural listening as part of a larger system of mutually incommensurable and incompatible strategies, to be employed as the occasion warrants" (49). Complete mastery of music is impossible. However, it cannot be denied that the listener can have a desire to master the music s/he is listening to. S/he might try to achieve mastery by attempting to grasp the music. But complete mastery can never be achieved, regardless whether the music is tonal or atonal. At most, the listener can achieve a sense, a certain degree, of musical comprehension.

Narrative structuring can be a valuable addition to the possible manners of grasping music, and in this sense narrative listening is structural, and thus it cannot be regarded as anti-structural listening. But I do not maintain that this is the only manner in which musical comprehension can be attained, nor do I want to claim that musical comprehension is the single most valuable element in the experience of music. Moreover, the composer and his/her intentions do not play any

role in my conception of narrative listening. As a result, narrative listening is not entirely structural, either, but rather ant-anti-structural.

Consequently, the narrative analysis of music does not result in a "roadmap" to a unique correct manner of musical comprehension. Rather, it is one of the many possible ways in which music might be grasped, while grasping and comprehending music are just some of the manners through which music can be appreciated. Narrative analysis is not what Martin Scherzinger calls a form of immanent analysis, which

> […] yield[s] an interpretation of music that is eternally firm, rendered immobile by a kind of self-announced, wholly immanent meaning. By "immanent" I mean an account in which everything that is analytically relevant persists within the system under investigation. Such an interpretation would recognize neither a disjuncture between what the musical event means and its *happening* nor any appeal to independent criteria. (2004: 272, emphasis in original)

Immanent analysis of music implies that the meaning of music is fixed and can be discovered by exclusively concentrating on the music itself, without involving extramusical concepts or even other musical works or traditions. In contrast, narrative analysis resembles Scherzinger's conception of imaginative analysis (273), in that it offers an alternative possibility of experiencing the music. It gives rise to new perspectives and new ways of organizing musical sounds, while resisting the tendency to fix musical structures and look upon music as a medium having just one, single meaning that is eternally valid.

Yet, as Joseph Dubiel notes, the notion of structure runs the risk of implying some kind of truth and universal value, and might even conflict with an open-minded manner of listening:

> [S]ome of the connotations of "structure" – those of logic, pertinence, comprehensiveness – may limit our imaginations […]; may even actively lead us away from good possibilities. Let us say that at least that the thing we hear, the thing we put together in experience, in reaction to, in consequence of, our encounter with a musical "structure" need not be expected to have those connoted characteristics. And in that case, why should we even take the trouble to expect the thing encountered to have those characteristics? (2004: 187)

"Structure" presupposes a degree of clarity, of being univocal, perhaps even of truthfulness. Thus, if a listener expects to hear a musical structure, these presuppositions might influence his/her experience of the music. The listener might expect the music to comply with these presuppositions, which music probably is not able to do. Yet, this is a problem that many, if not all, listening stances share. Consequently, a

listener who assumes a narrative listening stance might expect too much of the music as well.

Moreover, an analysis that focuses on the music's capacity to reveal some kind of structure might, on the one hand, yield very clear results, in the sense that the outcome of the analysis is this structure. On the other hand, however, this can also be deceptive. The gravest risk might be that the clarity and straightforwardness of this kind of analysis leads to regarding it as being incontestably true. Yet, rather than being the aim of analysis, structure is a tool. It can help point out elements and relations in the object under analysis, but this identification is not the end of analysis, nor is it an indication of its correctness or objectivity. Instead, it can function as the starting point of the articulation of one of the possible manners in which the music can be interpreted, without claiming that this possibility is more correct than others, because it is based on structure. As Dubiel puts it:

> [A] notion like "structure" might serve as a way to hold open the possibility of discovery, the possibility of responding aurally to something in a piece to which I was not antecedently attuned. And although I may derive a stimulus from some bit of musical analysis, it is important that I avoid any sense of obligation to listen to, or for, the particular facts that the analysis manages to mention, in the terms in which it mentions them – obligation to push the experience back along the chain of its possible causes, one might say. (2004: 198)

A structural analysis of a given musical work can be regarded as a suggestion for a particular listening strategy. It might point out characteristics in the music that might have remained unnoticed otherwise, without being prescriptive in the sense that the listener has to listen for any or all of the elements specified in the analysis.

I consider the narrative listening stance that I propose in this study in the same manner: it is not a reconstruction of a listening experience, nor is it a recipe in order to arrive at a "correct" way of musical listening. Instead, I consider a narrative listening stance to be an alternative manner of musical listening, one that does not exclude other possibilities to experience the music, but can be added to the set of possible modes of listening. And, as a theorist, I articulate what this listening stance might imply.

Fred Everett Maus maintains that a theorist is more than just an articulator and considers him/her as a re-composer:

> Listening experiences, with their passive qualities, would be the starting point and motivation for a narrative of reversal that ultimately places the theorist in active roles, as both the fantasy composer in an act of imagined re-composition and the writer who displays control over verbal material. (2004: 38)

Although many listening experiences may be passive, as Maus asserts, they are not always passive, especially when contemporary music is concerned. New music might offer new sounds and sonic structures that challenge the listener's musical habits, which might force the listener to abandon these habits and to come up with a different, new manner of listening. As Maus asserts, theorists assume active roles, yet I am reluctant to call the theorist's or analyst's activities acts of re-composition. I would rather compare the theorist's role to that of the performer, for both the performer and the theorist give a particular account of a musical piece. Not by re-composing it, but by making explicit the music's expressive potentialities.

In her 2000 study, Jane O'Dea discusses the balance between the character of the performer and that of the musical piece performed. She argues that a player's virtuosity must not corrupt or overshadow the character of a musical piece. The performer must not regard him/herself as more important than the work. It is the performer's task, however, to bring a musical piece to life. Only then, O'Dea contends, a performer can transform the expressive structures of a musical composition into something that can be grasped aurally by an audience. In order to achieve this, O'Dea claims that a certain amount of virtuosity is necessary. To illustrate this point, she quotes Harry Haskell, who states that historically authentic performances often lack "[…] the play of the performer's skill and personality on the composer's creation [which is] the lifeblood of old and new music alike" (86), and thus sound far less lively than the composer perhaps would have wanted it to sound. Therefore, O'Dea concludes, a good rendition of a musical piece is to a large extent dependent on incorporating a proper amount of virtuosity into the performance.

Likewise, the virtuosity of an analyst, i.e. the analyst's theoretical baggage and his/her ability to apply this baggage, is necessary to turn a musical piece into a more meaningful object. As Lawrence Kramer puts it:

> Words situate music in a multiplicity of cultural contexts, both those to which the music "belongs" in an immediate sense and those to which it stands adjacent in ways that often become apparent only once the words are in play. In the process, words invest music with the very capacity to "speak" of its contexts that it is usually thought to lack, and is often prized for lacking. Neither the speech nor the contexts – this can't be stressed too much – are "extrinsic" to the music involved; the three terms are inseparable in both theory and practice. (2003: 124-125)

Analysis, which is a verbal account of a musical piece, allows the music to speak. It can enhance, and make explicit, the music's

expressive qualities. And a virtuoso analysis enables the music to say things that would be left unsaid otherwise.

O'Dea furthermore argues that finding a balance between the character of the performer and that of the musical piece performed comes down to the performer striving for internal goods instead of external goods, terms that she borrows from Aristotle. External goods, she explains, are things like fame, prestige and monetary reward. These goods are in short supply: they are competitive, as O'Dea calls them. Internal goods, on the other hand, are not in short supply. Goods such as technical facility, pride, satisfaction, and the thrill of learning to communicate meaningfully with your audience are not competitive in nature. As O'Dea remarks:

> Your developing an effective range of technical skills does not prevent anyone else from doing the same. Quite the contrary; your efforts in this direction might well enable and/or inspire others to do likewise. (2000: 27)

That is why she finds it regrettable that in most professional music schools and other educational settings not the striving for internal, but rather the striving for external goods is advocated. In this way, O'Dea contends, it becomes very hard for students to achieve integrity in musical performance, which is a combination of the striving for internal goods and of finding a balance between virtuosity and communicating the character of a musical piece to an audience.

A similar balance has to be found in analysis. Letting the music speak via analysis implies a certain reserve as concerns the application of theory with which the analyst can articulate aspects that s/he feels are relevant in a particular musical work. The temptation should be resisted to force the music to say what the analyst wants it to say, regardless of the character of the music.

There are more resemblances between music analysis and musical performance. As I will explain in more detail in chapter 3, a musical score always allows for many different renditions of the same musical composition, since it is impossible to prescribe every musical nuance by means of a score. The score leaves many options open, which the performer can fill in as s/he likes. Likewise, sounding music, which is – at least in this study – the object of music analysis, is not wholly determined. More specifically, the meaning of the music the listener is listening to is not fixed by the music itself. Musical meaning emerges as a result of the interaction between the music and the listener. And the analyst is a particular kind of listener, one that articulates this interaction. As a result, just as the character of the performer codetermines a musical performance, the subjectivity of the analyst influences, to a large extent, his/her analysis of a musical piece. This again implies that many different analyses of the same musical piece

can, and will, exist, that do not necessarily exclude each other. But this does not mean that there are not also many analyses possible that make no sense at all. One reason why an analysis might make no sense might be when it has no relation with the music anymore, and only with the subjectivity of the analyst, or his/her urge to show off his/her theoretical virtuosity. It is because of these kinds of analyses that some critics argue that discussing musical meaning is a useless activity. These kinds of discussions are not objective, they contend, and at most tell us something about the subjectivity of the analyst, and not about the music.

Kramer, to a certain extent, disagrees with these critics. The analyst's subjectivity is not an obstacle in the discussion of musical meaning. Rather, this subjectivity is the very subject of inquiry,

> […] understanding it as a socially constructed position made available by the music and occupied to a greater or lesser degree by the listener. Subjectivity so understood is not an obstacle to credible understanding but its vehicle. The semantic problem is solved by seeking, not to decode music as a virtual utterance, but to describe the interplay of musical technique with the general stream of communicative actions. (2003: 126)

The fact that musical meaning is, to a very large extent, undetermined when isolating the music, is not a sign of arbitrariness, but rather, as Kramer calls it, "[…] the enabling condition of musical meaning, and the site where the interplay of music and culture is most fully realized" (127). So, just as I argued above, Kramer believes that musical meaning can only be studied in a meaningful way by focusing on the interaction between music and listener, and not by exclusively dissecting the music itself. The study of musical structure alone is insufficient to come up with a viable account of musical meaning.

Verbal analyses of a musical piece, just as musical performances, are not analytic in the sense that they only get something out of the music that was already there. Because these interpretations are the result of the interaction between the music and the analyst, they are both about the music and the analyst, or, more precisely, about the music and the analyst's approach to this music. For instance, the music analyses in this study are the result of the interaction between contemporary music and narrative theories, by means of which I articulate possible interactions between contemporary music and a listener who assumes a narrative listening stance. As a result, I am exploring the narrative potentialities of this kind of music. In so doing, I am trying to attain the goal of music analysis as Nicola Dibben envisages it, who claims that

> […] the important point is that music analysis and criticism are concerned with persuasion rather than proof, with providing ways of experiencing music – the ramifications of which are only slowly becoming apparent for psychological approaches to music listening. As others have argued, one function of theoretical accounts is to provide new ways of hearing (or imagining) music – in effect, to produce music. (2003: 200)

Music analysis is supposed to supply alternative ways of listening and experiencing music, and this is indeed what I aim at achieving in this study.

Regarded as such, music analysis cannot be a mere description of the music. Referring to Judith Butler about gender identity, Nicolas Cook argues the following about the identity of musicology:

> [T]here is no such thing as gender identity independent of the behaviour that "expresses" it; it is a matter of what your behaviour *is*, not what it represents. And there is an obvious affinity between this and the argument recently advanced by Philip Bohlman for seeing musicology as a "political act"; as he puts it, musicology "not only describes but prescribes through its acts of interpretation." Musicology, in short, doesn't just reflect practice; it helps mould it. (1999: 243, emphasis in original)

Musicology, with music analysis as its principal instrument, is not the description of a musical practice, be it composing, performing, or listening to music. Rather, Cook, in following Philip Bohlman, contends that, to a certain extent at least, musicology forms these practices. Because of this formative role, Cook believes that Butler's account of performativity is directly applicable to music theory: "'[S]tructure,' it would now read, 'is performatively constituted by the very "expressions" that are said to be its result'" (243). Thus, musical structure is not something that is in the music itself. Rather, musical structure is created through the act of analysis, which is not an analytic act in Immanuel Kant's sense, but a synthetic one. Music analysis is an act of creation. And it is performative in the sense that it affects, and even helps shape, musical reality.

Christopher Norris acknowledges that music analysis can indeed have an influence on musical practices:

> There is an interesting question here about music, that is, whether reading an analysis of this or that musical work can actually have some decisive effect on our *experience* of the work in question, rather than our "knowledge" of it in some merely abstract, musicological sense. I think that it can, that musical understanding ("appreciation," if you like) can be greatly enhanced by this kind of analysis. (Kermode and Norris 2003: 122-123, emphasis in original)

And again, this harks back to one of the principal aims of this study: exploring the ways in which the comprehension of contemporary music can be enhanced by assuming a narrative listening stance.

In this study, each chapter addresses an element that I consider to be crucial for musical narrativity. Firstly, the ability to regard a musical work as a narrative implies that the listener has achieved some kind of GRASP regarding this piece. Therefore, chapter 1 starts off with a discussion of what it means to grasp a musical composition. Next, the problems regarding the grasp of contemporary, atonal music are addressed. Why is it that (Western) listeners seem to have no problem understanding tonal music, but seem unable to grasp atonal works? This chapter concludes with a discussion of the possibility of grasping music through narrative structuring, and with the suggestion that a narrative listening stance might help the listener in comprehending contemporary music.

A narrative listening stance is only useful when music can be interpreted in a narrative manner, i.e. when musical works can be considered as musical TALES. Chapter 2 deals with the question in which manner music can be considered as narrative. In this chapter I discuss the basic narrative elements that are distinguished in narratology, and explain how these can be modified, in order to come up with a musical narratology. The musical analyses in this chapter illustrate the ways in which narrative elements function in contemporary music, how contemporary musical compositions can tell musical stories, and in which sense these compositions might problematize these separate elements.

Temporality is vital in both music and narrativity. Therefore, in chapter 3, I explore the relation between the representation of temporality in musical and verbal narrative, in order to see whether or not there are crucial differences between the two. In particular, I concentrate on the notion of what I call musical TENSE, which is the possibility music offers to establish a relation between the musical past and the musical present.

In chapter 4, I relate the notion of musical temporality to another important characteristic of (musical) narrative: the sense that a narrative moves towards certain goals, or ENDS. Narratives suggest some sense of motion, a sense of going in some direction. Music elicits this sense perhaps even stronger than verbal narrative does. Therefore, in this chapter, I discuss the ways music can arouse this feeling of linearity and goal-directed motion within a narratological context. In order for music to elicit this impression during the listening, the listener must be able to plot his/her way through the music, i.e. able to structure the music and distill some kind of meaning from it. I argue that this is only possible because of musical tense; would the music

lack tense, the listener would have no opportunity to structure and reflect on the music.

Eero Tarasti argues that musical narrativity emerges precisely from a series of emotions that are caused by the music itself. This would imply that musical emotion, i.e. that musical quality that makes that the listener is MOVED by listening to music, is a key ingredient in musical narrativity. In my account of musical narrativity, however, musical emotion does not play a central role. In chapter 5, I examine to what extent Tarasti's account is compatible with mine. Psychoanalysis might be a suitable approach to address this question. Psychoanalysis might also be useful to address the second question that is discussed in this chapter: can a listener comprehend a musical piece that on the one hand elicits narrativity, but on the other hand frustrates the possibility of narrativity? Trauma theory, in which the impossibility of closure and the resistance to narrative integration are discussed, might be helpful in answering this question.

The narrative structuring of music results in a musical narrative. Yet, the question remains what this narrative is about. Which THEMES can such a narrative cover? Since many theorists deny the possibility of musical narrativity exactly because they are convinced that there cannot exist a musical narrative content, this is an important question. Therefore, in chapter 6, I address this question by demonstrating that a musical narrative does have contents. In this chapter, I focus explicitly on the possible contents of atonal musical narratives, and contend that these musical narratives ultimately can be considered as metanarratives: they tell the story of the process of narrativization.

1 GRASP

Intelligible Sounds

When a piece of music begins, sounds can be heard, which last a certain period of time. Regarded in isolation, these sounds are just that: sounds. But because a listener hears them within a certain context and with certain expectations, s/he does not regard these sounds just as sounds, but calls it music. The vast majority of musical works consist of sounds that are associated with music as such. The sound of a violin, playing a note, is usually interpreted as a musical sound, whereas the sound of a drill is not. This qualification is not the result of some kind of universal law, but of the historical musical tradition. In other words: because the listener is familiar with particular musical conventions, s/he calls the sound of a violin a musical sound, as opposed to the sound of a drill.

Music thus relies on conventions in order to be recognized as music. David Lewis describes a convention as a regularity in behavior. It restricts behavior without removing all choice (1969: 51). Within the constraints of a convention the subject has room to determine his/her own behavior. A convention thus creates a frame in which freedom of choice exists. One example of a convention is language; a language is conventionally determined, for the syntactical rules and the lexicon are more or less fixed, whereas the language user can determine, within the boundaries of these conventions, what s/he wants to say.

Lewis argues that the principal function of conventions is the solving of coordination problems. Coordination problems are "[…] situations of interdependent decision by two or more agents in which coincidence of interest predominates and in which there are two or more proper coordination equilibria" (24). A coordination equilibrium is a "[…] combination in which no one would have been better off had *any one* agent alone acted otherwise, either himself or someone else" (14, emphasis in original). In other words: a coordination problem arises in situations in which two or more subjects have to adjust their behavior in order to realize a position which is as optimal as possible for all. Coordination can be achieved by making agreements or by following precedents. By reviewing the manner in which one acted in certain situations of the past one can predict future actions in similar situations (36-42). Acting according to agreements or by following precedents results in a regularity in behavior. And since a convention is a regularity in behavior, conventions are created out of these manners of acting.

According to Lewis, the notion of convention now can be defined as follows:

> A regularity *R* in the behavior of members of a population *P* when they are agents in a recurrent situation *S* is a *convention* if and only if it is true that, and it is common knowledge in *P* that, in almost any instance of *S* among members of *P*, (1) almost everyone conforms to *R*; (2) almost everyone expects almost everyone else to conform to *R*; (3) almost everyone has approximately the same preferences regarding all possible combinations of actions; (4) almost everyone prefers that any one more conform to *R*, on condition that almost everyone conform to *R*; (5) almost everyone would prefer that any one more conform to *R'*, on condition that almost everyone conform to *R'*, where *R'* is some possible regularity in the behavior of members of *P* in *S*, such that almost no one in almost any instance of *S* among members of *P* could conform both to *R'* and to *R*. (78)

How does this definition hold in the case of qualifying a sound as a musical sound? In this case, *R* is the qualification of a certain sound as a musical sound by members of *P*, every time this sound sounds, which is *S*. The qualification of a certain sound as a musical sound – *R* – only is a convention, if and only if almost all members of *P* qualify this sound as such. Moreover, every member expects the other members of *P* to qualify this sound as a musical sound, too, and every member has, in general, to qualify roughly the same sounds as musical sounds. In other words: not only do they have to agree on this particular sound, but on a whole range of sounds. Additionally, all members of *P* prefer that almost all other members of *P* qualify the same sounds as musical sounds. Finally, if any member of *P* were to disqualify a sound that s/he perceives, i.e. situation *S*, as a musical sound, then s/he would prefer that almost all other members would disqualify the same sound in *S*, on the condition that a sound cannot at the same time be qualified and disqualified as a musical sound within a population *P*. In short: *R* holds if *P* consists of listeners that have more or less the same knowledge which is necessary for the qualification of a perceptible sound, i.e. situation *S*, as a musical sound. As a result, *P* remains a population consisting of likeminded listeners, since they agree on which sounds are musical and which are not.

Cynthia M. Grund, in her 1995 study into the ontology of music, gives a formal definition of music that is compatible with this conception. Her definition explains what a musical sound is and where the difference lies between a musical sound and "ordinary" sound. Grund acknowledges the fact that music is a succession of sounds, but she also contends that a sound only becomes music when these sounds are part of a so-called reference class. This class is not a collection of actual sounds, but of concepts that are stored in the mind of the listener and that are formed with the aid of musical precedents. In other words:

it is a set of musical conventions. According to Grund, a collection of sounds can be regarded as music, if and only if all sounds in this collection are compatible with the concepts in a reference class, i.e. satisfy the musical conventions the listener has (1995: 73-77). In short: only those sounds that are compatible with the concepts in a reference class are musical signs.[1]

However, there is no such thing as a fixed, static set of musical sounds. New sounds are presented as musical sounds constantly, and the members of *P* have to decide whether these sounds are accepted as musical sounds or not. New coordination equilibria regarding these sounds have to be realized. Conversely, if a composer or musician wants to create music that is accepted by the members of *P*, s/he has to take into account the musical conventions that hold within *P*. In this case, a coordination problem between this composer and the members of *P* might arise. A member of *P*, i.e. a listener, compares the sounds, produced by the composer/musician, to the musical sounds s/he is already familiar with and tries to fit these sounds within this set of musical precedents. The composer/musician, on the other hand, has to try to connect in one way or another to the set of musical precedents of the members of *P*. That is, if s/he wants his/her music to be appreciated by this listener. For, as Bruce Ellis Benson remarks, a composer can choose between compromising his/her music in order to reach a large audience, and composing for oneself exclusively, without taking into account the listener and his/her musical conventions (2003: 174-175).

But music listening comprises more than just the recognition of sounds as musical sounds. On the one hand, there is the recognition of musical sounds; the listener qualifies sounds as musical, because s/he hears certain characteristics that lead him/her to believe that s/he is hearing music. These sounds more or less comply with the musical precedents s/he is familiar with, and therefore s/he calls these musical sounds. This results in the listener assuming a listening stance that differs from everyday listening. As soon as s/he has decided to regard a series of sounds as music, other conventions, criteria, and precedents are used while listening to it. Once this stance is assumed, a melodic minor second, say, will be regarded as a leading note, and not as a

[1] For those readers who are familiar with formal logic, I give the formal representation of Grund's definition of music, where x is a sound and Z' is a subset of the set Z of all possible sounds. The predicate $\mu(x)$ means "x is a musical sound." T is a reference class, $\Re$ is the set of all reference classes, and u is a sound from the subset Z'. The counterfactual implication $x \mathbin{\square\!\!\rightarrow} y$ must be read as "if x were the case, then y would be the case." Grund uses this counterfactual implication, because a sound u cannot actually be a member of a reference class. The members of this class are all concepts, whereas u is an actual sound (Grund 1995: 77):

$$\forall x \in Z\,[\mu(x) \leftrightarrow \exists Z' \subseteq Z\,[[\forall u \in Z'\,\exists T \in \Re\,(Z \cap T = \varnothing \wedge (T \in \wp(Z) \mathbin{\square\!\!\rightarrow} u \in T))] \wedge x \in Z']]$$

series of sound waves with a small difference in frequency. The acoustic material gives out, as it were, its original physical qualities in favor of musical qualities, as soon as a listener who assumes a musical listening stance experiences it.

However, to be able to decide that a certain series of sounds represents a leading tone is a step beyond just regarding sounds as musical sounds. At that initial stage the listener's musical experience consists of nothing more than a concatenation of perceptions of sounds that s/he identifies as being musical. Yet, the example of the leading tone shows that the listener's musical experience does not equal the pure labeling of sounds. The listener is capable of relating musical phrases to other phrases within the same piece. Moreover, this relating is regarded as one of the most important characteristics of music. The composer Karlheinz Stockhausen, for instance, states that "[m]usic presents order relationships in time" (quoted in Grant 2001: 135).[2] Additionally, the listener may relate musical phrases to other musical works or practices, or to nonmusical ideas or phenomena. In short: the listener can structure music while listening to it.[3] This capacity, together with the ability to recognize musical sounds, makes up a musical listening experience, with the experience of an event, or of a series of events, being a representation of that event or series of events, created by the experiencing subject. When a musical event is experienced, this event is somehow made discursive.[4]

Both with the aid of musical conventions and with the expectations aroused by the music that has already sounded, a listener tries to make sense of the music s/he is listening to. Furthermore, as s/he receives more information by listening to the music, the listener can adjust and fine-tune his/her expectations. Jos Kunst calls this the unlearning-plus-learning process (UNLL-process). New information, in the shape of sounding music, might not cohere with the ideas and expectations the listener has regarding this music. As a result, the listener is forced to reject these ideas and expectations, to "unlearn" these, and to create, i.e. to "learn," new ideas and expectations that do cohere with both the music that has already sounded and the new sounds the listener perceives. These new ideas and expectations influence the manner in

[2] This is a surprising contention made by Stockhausen, if we take into account his ideal of composing music in moment form, i.e. compositions that consists of fragments that are completely disconnected from each other. Yet, on the other hand, Stockhausen himself also speaks of unity and form with regard to moment form, especially within individual moments (Stockhausen 1963: 189). Moreover, his later works have little or nothing to do with moment form.

[3] This structuring thus is not only the structuring of musical moments, but also of relating the music to extramusical phenomena. As a consequence, it is not a hermetic activity, but rather one that is influenced by social, cultural, and historical circumstances.

[4] In chapter 5 I will discuss this definition of experience in more detail.

which the listener experiences the continuation of the music. Every time ideas and expectations do not hold, the UNLL-process is put into operation (1978: 53-57). Thus, music listening is a two-directional process; earlier musical sounds influence the way the listener assesses future musical sounds, and new musical sounds can lead to a revision of the manner in which s/he views earlier musical sounds.

In this manner, the listener constructs a growing set of precedents during the listening, with which new expectations are aroused. The larger this set becomes, the more focused expectation becomes. As the listener has more information, it becomes more and more simple for him/her to make musical predictions regarding the continuation of the music s/he is listening to. As a consequence, the impact of an unexpected musical event is far greater. The more certain a listener is regarding his/her prediction, the greater the surprise of an unexpected moment.[5] Repetition, for instance, helps musical memory, which is crucial in music listening, as the composer Arnold Schoenberg remarks (1984: 282). Repetition can be a means to structure the music, by providing clues for the listener, while at the same time functioning as a pretext for a surprising moment that is yet to arrive. Ultimately, this process leads to what Kunst calls musical understanding (1978: 33-34).

In his 1978 study, Kunst develops his account of the UNLL-process into a formal model, involving modal logic. This model is a "[…] way of representing listeners' cognitive behavior" (116) with regard to a particular musical work. Kunst does not claim to predict, with this model, all possible behaviors a listener can exhibit. Rather, he proposes a mode of representation with which a particular listener's cognitive behavior, while experiencing a piece of music, can be articulated. This general model is the result of a theoretical reflection on the way in which a listener can make sense of the music s/he is listening to, with the UNLL-process being the theoretical foundation of this model.

Kunst furthermore regards music listening as an activity. For him, listening to music is not just the passive undergoing of the music, but rather an activity that aims at arriving at musical comprehension. And indeed, the UNLL-process can be seen as a description, or perhaps even a prescription, of the way a listener can gain a sense of comprehension. Likewise, the alternative listening stance that I propose in this study is an activity through which music, and contemporary music in particular, can be grasped. Thus, "grasp" is the activity of trying to make sense of the music, while "a certain degree of comprehension" is the result of this activity.

[5] In chapter 3, this phenomenon, which is called markedness, is elaborated in more detail.

Sensible Unities

The composer Anton Webern claims that unity must prevail in order to ensure the intelligibility of musical thought (Street 1989: 77-78). Webern thus argues that, somehow, a musical piece has to be regarded as some kind of whole; it has to have a graspable structure, which makes it a unity and makes it possible for the listener to arrive at some kind of comprehension of the music. The recognition of musical structure is a prerequisite for the possibility of grasping the music, and thus to comprehend it. As I explained above, a musical listening experience consists of both the recognition of musical sounds, and the structuring of the music while listening to it, although this structuring is not only intramusical, but involves extramusical phenomena as well. And by trying – for a listener may not succeed – to structure the music, the listener tries to regard this music as constituting a whole.

Showing the unity of music is also the aim of many forms of music analysis. As Jim Samson remarks, in music analysis at the beginning of the twentieth century,

> [u]nity and wholeness, whatever these may mean in a temporal art, were assumed a priori, and the analytical act was their demonstration. The work became a structure, and in that lays its value. It was at this stage of its development that music theory found common grounds with the emergence of a structuralist poetics in other art forms. (1999: 41)

According to those forms of music analysis, music is valuable if and only if it consists of a structure that ensures its unity, and the sole aim of analysis is to articulate this structure, and thus its value.

The idea of equating music analysis with the search for musical unity is criticized by many theorists, such as Alan Street. He argues that the demonstration of musical unity through analysis is nothing more than an arbitrary act. In his view, the demonstration of musical incoherence would be just as valid. There is nothing in the music that forces the listener to regard it as a unity, rather than a diversity:

> What I want to suggest […] is that, ubiquity apart, the unifying urge is by no means immune to doubt. Indeed, far from demonstrating its objectivity in every case, the same ideal constantly succeeds in exposing its own arbitrariness. By this reckoning, the championship of unity over diversity represents nothing other than a generalized state of false consciousness: illusion rather than reality. (1989: 80)

Street thus concludes that musical unity is an illusion, not a reality. Yet, as I argued, it is the listener that structures the music into a graspable whole that can be comprehended. Hence, it is the listener that recognizes in the music a certain structure. As a consequence, this

might as well be an illusion, in the sense that the music does not "really" have this particular structure. But the reality is that the listener can grasp the music because s/he has distilled out of the music this structure. For his/her comprehension of the music, it is irrelevant whether or not this structure is the "true" musical structure (whatever that may be). Because s/he is capable of relating musical phrases to other phrases within the same piece, and of relating musical phrases to other musical works, practices, and/or extramusical phenomena, s/he can get some kind of grasp, and thus a sense of comprehension, of the music. This comprehension might be an illusion, since s/he has constructed this unity him/herself, but this does not take away the validity of his/her listening experience.

Street furthermore maintains that methods of analysis that primarily focuses on musical unity transform music, which is a temporal cultural expression, into a spatial representation:

> [I]f, within the analytical project, the intention is always the same – to carry through a devotion to the principle of unity as an example of naturalized understanding – the result is also one-dimensional: subjugation of a genuinely temporal art to the service of a spatial aesthetic. (105)

Music analysis, especially those that focus on musical unity, tends to reduce music, which is a temporal, aural form of expression, into a spatial and visual unified whole. Musical analyses often contain diagrams, which are visual representations of the musical structure. These do not always necessarily have to have a detrimental effect on the analysis in which they appear. On the contrary: often they can really help in gaining more insight in the music. In this case, this insight is based on spatial representations, but they can nevertheless be very useful in analysis, as long as these representations do not negate the temporal nature of music. But admittedly, the production of diagrams sometimes seems to be the only goal in analysis. Yet, a graver concern is the tendency to equate the music with the musical score, thus with the visual representation of the music. As a possible result, the music is treated as a spatial, rather than a temporal, art. This means that one might identify relations that are not audible, but only perceptible visually, many analyses based on pitch-class set theory being a case in point. In these cases, musical unity is recognized in the visual representation that is the score, whereas this unity might not be recognizable when listening to a performance of the music.

Other theorists, such as Kevin Korsyn, interpret Street's account as an argument for the irrelevance of music analysis:

> Alan Street […] has argued that "the championship of unity over diversity represents nothing other than a generalized state of false consciousness."

> Since he offers no alternatives to the privileging of unity, however, his essay reads like an obituary for music analysis. (1999: 61)

On the one hand, one can agree with Korsyn and conclude that the only conclusion Street can draw is to refrain from music analysis altogether, since this activity is based on false premises. But on the other hand, one can read Street's argument as an appeal to critically examine the grounds on which music analysis is based. Through this examination, we might obtain some interesting results, as Samson explains: "The [nineteenth-century] unified musical work, celebrated by the institution of analysis, was a necessary, valuable, and glorious myth, but it was a myth shaped in all essentials by a particular set of social and historical circumstances" (1999: 42). Thus, a form of music analysis that is focused on revealing the unity of a musical work only, is based on nineteenth-century premises, which do not necessarily hold today. Korsyn, too, acknowledges that unity in art might be related to myth, and more particularly to myths regarding the unity of man. Viewing a work of art as a peculiar kind of subject, he argues,

> […] explains our investment in artistic unity: it is our own unity which is at stake. The aesthetic has become a "surrogate discourse" in which our hopes for the autonomy and freedom of the individual have been surreptitiously transferred to the aesthetic object. Indeed, the more precarious our hopes as real individuals have become, the greater the tendency has been to proclaim art the region where all restrictions on freedom and autonomy are transcended. This tempts us to make inflated claims for artistic unity, attributing to art a fantastic degree of autonomy, beyond the power of any artifact to achieve. (1999: 60)

Although he does not want to disqualify music analysis altogether, Korsyn recognizes that regarding a musical composition, or artworks in general, as a unity might sometimes lead to exaggerated or even bombastic interpretations of those artworks. Yet, Korsyn acknowledges,

> […] the unitary, monologic subject is the model for both the autonomous work of art and continuous history. Thus we can imagine a triangle that captures this complicity between music analysis and history: the repression of heterogeneity in analysis parallels the repression of discontinuity in history, and both originate in the repression of otherness that creates the monologic subject. (67)

The myth of unity not only influences the human subject's views on art, but also determines his/her views on history. In both cases, discontinuity is repressed, and continuity and unity are stressed.

Many musical works may not properly fit into this mold of unity and continuity, and this is why Street opposes to forms of music analysis that only focus on these aspects:

> While formalist and, more particularly, organicist attitudes are thought unshakable, attempts to investigate repertoire from outside the Austro-Germanic line must […] fail to negate the suggestion of overly narrow traditionalism. To the contrary, the principle which still has to be grasped is that matter dictates manner, not vice versa; until then there can be no enlightened reinterpretation of any alternative musical heritage. (1989: 89-90)

Street thus calls for methods of analysis that respect the specific characteristics of musical works, instead of the other way around. As a result, not all compositions necessarily comply with notions such as unity. As Samson puts it: "[C]losed concepts of an artwork, involving such notions as structure, unity, wholeness, and complexity, are products of a particular kind of institutionalized analytic-referential discourse. They cannot be equated with the work itself" (1999: 43). The discourse dictates unity, whereas unity is not necessarily elicited by the artwork itself.

This is particularly evident with regard to contemporary music. Robert Fink argues that "[…] to demand organic unity from contemporary composition is ultimately quixotic: it is hopeless to insist that music reflect, not the *heterotopia* [a disorder in which a large number of different possible orders reside simultaneously] in which we live, but some one of the many utopias in which we no longer believe" (1999: 132, emphasis in original). On the one hand, Fink observes that many contemporary musical compositions resist organic unity by being discontinuous. On the other hand, he contends that music which is composed today reflects today's social conditions, which amount to disorder, and does not so much approach some ancient ideal of unity.

Although it might be uncertain whether contemporary music indeed reflects contemporary social conditions (but it might very well be possible to interpret it as such), his observation regarding the relation between unity and contemporary music seems to hold. This kind of music often resists unity, in the sense that it is very hard to recognize relations – and thus some kind of structure – within the music. In order to respect the nature of such musical works, and to avoid the forcing of particular discourses on the music, Korsyn remarks that "[w]e need new paradigms for analysis, new models that will allow both unity and heterogeneity" (1999: 60). In quoting Mikhail Bakhtin, he argues that, in accepting these paradigms, "[t]he unity of the work of art changes into something more complex: 'unity not as an innate one-and-only, but as a dialogic *concordance* of unmerged twos or multiples'" (63,

emphasis in original). As a result, this so-called dialogic analysis would

> […] reverse the priorities of traditional music analysis. Rather than reducing difference to sameness, in an attempt to secure the boundaries of an autonomous, self-identical text, dialogic analysis would begin from this apparent unity, this *unity-effect*, but would move towards heterogeneity, activating and releasing the voices of heteroglossia. (64-65, emphasis in original)

Korsyn thus proposes to take the work's "veil of unity" as the starting point of analysis, and to investigate how other texts and discourses are interweaved into the music, and possibly weaken the impression of unity of the music. In short: Korsyn intends to focus primarily on the relation with other musical works, practices, nonmusical ideas, and phenomena. However, he does not explicitly suggest concentrating on possible intramusical heterogeneity or discontinuity.

Yet, new music often resists unity primarily because the music itself is discontinuous, and not because of its intertextuality. But at the same time the listener has a natural inclination to regard musical works as unities. As I explained above, the listener in principle is capable of relating musical phrases to other phrases within the same piece, while s/he may also relate musical phrases to other musical works or practices. And, as soon as s/he assumes a musical listening stance, the listener oftentimes is inclined to create these links, which might result in regarding the music as a unified whole and to a sense of comprehension of the music.[6] As a consequence, this stance may also be assumed when listening to contemporary music, in which the concept of musical unity may be problematized. Thus, while the music itself might be discontinuous, a listener – especially one that is used to listen to tonal music – still might try to turn it into a graspable whole.

Fred Everett Maus puts it as follows: "One important kind of musical unity, I suggest, is *the unity of a listening experience*, or (in a more precise, if cumbersome, formulation), the unity and distinctness of a particular experience of listening to a composition" (1999: 179, emphasis in original). In regarding musical unity as such, the interaction between music and listener is emphasized, which "[…] locates unity, along with other musical qualities, in a particularized, contingent event, rather than an ontologically and experientially mysterious 'work' or 'composition'" (180). Musical unity thus is established when listening to music. The locus of unity is not the music itself, but rather the act of listening to music. In referring to John Dewey, Maus explains this assertion:

[6] But I do not want to imply that the listener always tries to do so; at the end of this study I will discuss possible alternative listening stances a listener can assume.

> Listening to certain musical compositions, one may have an experience that is demarcated from experience-in-general as a distinct event. This experience consists of interaction between the listener and the music, in which the listener both "does" and "undergoes" – that is, construes the music, and responds continuously, on the basis of previous construals, to new sounds. The experience can be described as unified, and the occurrence of such experiences is one reason to associate music and unity. (180)

A listening experience differs from ordinary, everyday experiences, and thus can be considered to be a distinct, marked event. Moreover, during this event the listener is not just a passive receiver of sounds, but also a co-creator of the musical experience. As I elaborated above, the listener tries to make sense of the music s/he is listening to by adjusting and fine-tuning his/her musical expectations, as s/he receives more information by listening to the music, as well as reinterpreting past musical phrases in the light of new sounds s/he is hearing (the UNLL-process). The experience, during which the UNLL-process takes place, can be regarded as a unifying experience, in the sense that this process is not disturbed by other activities on the listener's part. (Unless, of course, the listener is distracted. But for the sake of my argument, I am assuming a listener whose attention is solely focused on the music s/he is hearing.) As a result, the listening experience is a unifying experience, an experience during which the listener may try to grasp, and subsequently to comprehend, the music by establishing relations between musical phrases and between the music and extramusical phenomena. As a result, the music-as-listened-to is made discursive, for the listener is able to articulate and evaluate, verbally or otherwise, the musical relations s/he has recognized, both within the musical piece itself as well as the relations with extramusical phenomena.

Serial Challenges

A musical listening experience differs from everyday experience. It is an experience in which attention is focused on sounds which the listener labels as musical sounds, and in which s/he tries to relate these sounds to each other and to other phenomena. One can safely argue that musical listening thus is a more intense form of listening than everyday listening is. Yet, according to the composer Helmut Lachenmann, even when listening to music, the subject's attention is not sufficiently challenged:

> The art of listening, which in an age of a daily tidal wave of music is at once overtaxed and underchallenged, and thus controlled, has to liberate itself by penetrating the structure of what is heard, by deliberately incorporating, provoking and revealing perception. This seems to me to be the true tradition of western art. (1995: 101)

Most kinds of music that are presented are too confirming; it does not present the listener something new or hitherto unheard. As a result, Lachenmann argues, the musical structures s/he derives from this music are almost meaningless, because these only confirm what s/he already knows: "Musical structures derive their strength solely from conscious or unconscious resistance, the friction between them and prevailing structures of existence and consciousness. Any concept of complexity which ignores this aspect is meaningless" (100). In order to create this resistance, Lachenmann proposes to shatter the familiar by interjecting so-called "non-music" throughout the music. This "non-music" consists of sounds and phrases that are not conventionally associated with musical sounds and practices. When confronted with these novel sounds, the listener is forced to adjust his/her musical conventions, in order to incorporate these sounds, or to refrain from listening altogether. Despite the risk of losing the listener, Lachenmann is convinced that this is the only way to transform musical listening into what he calls genuine perception:

> [I]t is only by allowing oneself to experience this "non-music" that listening becomes genuine perception. It is only now that one begins to listen differently, that one is reminded of the changeability of listening and of aesthetic behavior, reminded, in other words, of one's own structure, one's own structural changeability and also of the element of human invariability which makes all this possible in the first place: the power of what one calls the human spirit. (101)

Conventionally unmusical sounds underline the flexibility of musical, and other, conventions. It is through trying to incorporate these sounds in his/her existing musical paradigms that the human subject is made aware of the unstable nature of his/her ideas and views, which Lachenmann calls the human subject's structure. Hence, ultimately, listening to novel music results in a deepening of the subject's self-knowledge.

Integral serial music – music in which all musical parameters are ordered according to rows – can be regarded as an instance of such novel music.[7] Although integral serial composition already is being practiced for over half a century, it still challenges the listener's attempts to comprehend this kind of music. Moreover, as Umberto Eco remarks, integral serial music is not about the reconstruction of an origin, but the discovery of new possibilities:

[7] Although the main focus in this chapter is on integral serial music, most of the issues I discuss here hold for all atonal contemporary music. But because in integral serial music the discrepancies between method and perception are most evident, I will primarily focus on this kind of music in this chapter.

> The main goal of serial thought is to allow codes to evolve historically and to discover new ones, rather than to trace them back to the original generative Code (the Structure). Thus, serial thought aims at the production of history and not at the rediscovery, beneath history, of the atemporal abscissae of all possible communication. In other words, the aim of structural thought is to discover, whereas that of serial thought is to produce. (quoted in Grant 2001: 213)

Serial music[8] thus complies with Lachenmann's "non-music," in the sense that listening to serial music is not a confirming activity, but rather an activity in which new views and ideas can be created.

But why is serial music challenging for the listener? After all, serial music is composed according to strict rules, which order the musical sounds. Thus, one could argue that this would result in a musical structure that is clearly recognizable. In reality, however, this is not the case. Morag J. Grant argues that

> [r]ather than a method of ordering, serial technique […] appears as a method of unordering. It was a method of dissolving particular ties, so that others could come to the fore; its constraint was, not so paradoxically, its freedom. This depends on realizing that the relationship between working method and audible result is discrete rather than direct, and this is exactly where most analyses of serial music get into difficulties. (2001: 154-155)

Serial music does not have the harmonic structure – which the listener can perceive – that tonal music has, and instead is structured by using a method that is both strict and arbitrary. It is strict in the sense that serial music is composed by following strict rules – although in more recent serial compositions these rules are applied in a less strict manner, whereas these rules are not aurally perceptible in the resulting composition. On the other hand, serial method is arbitrary in the sense that it puts fewer constraints on the ways serial music can be structured by the listener. Human memory is not capable to memorize the rows within a serial musical work and recognize their permutations, which means that the music does not determine the listener's structuring activity as much as tonal music does.[9] Although these rows and permutations might be clearly visible in the score, it is very hard, if not impossible, to hear them. Furthermore, in many cases it can be very difficult to hear symmetries, mirroring, and other proportions in serial music, as Grant remarks, whereas these are also easily recognizable in the score (63-65, 104-105). And as I argued above, analysis that focus

[8] Henceforth I will use the term "serial" instead of "integral serial." With this term, I refer both to integral serial music and to dodecaphonic music, i.e. music in which only pitch is subordinated to rows.

[9] This is confirmed by experiments, conducted by Michel Imberty, which I refer to below. I will discuss the function of musical memory in the next two chapters.

on these musical characteristics equate the music with the musical score, and thus with the visual representation of the music, rather than with the sounding music.

Grant observes that serial music is composed by using a combinatorial method, whereas tonal music is composed by using a dynamic approach. In other words: serial music is a form of constructivism, while tonal music is based on functional harmony (225-226). In serial music, functional harmony, the "natural" ordering of pitches, is replaced by a compositional method that clearly is a construction, a fabrication, a fiction (with functional harmony being a fiction, too, but disguised as a natural phenomenon).[10] Serial music is not presented as a representation of some natural order, or of reality. It is presented as a construct. Brian McHale observes a similar phenomenon in the postmodern novel; this kind of novel "[…] has become less the mirror of nature, more an *artifact*, visibly a *made* thing" (1987: 30, emphasis in original). Moreover, postmodernist fiction "[…] is above all illusion-breaking art; it systematically disturbs the air of reality by foregrounding the ontological structure of texts and of fictional worlds" (221). As an example, McHale discusses Italo Calvino's novel *Invisible Cities* (1972), in which descriptions of cities are given that obviously could not exist in the real world. On the contrary: often these cities are in contradiction with themselves, or with each other. For instance, according to the descriptions given by Marco Polo, there are three different cities that all encompass the entire space of the empire of the Great Khan. This empire, McHale concludes, thus is overtly fictional (43-45). Or take William Gass's *Willie Masters' Lonesome Wife* (1968). In this book typography and page layout are exploited, which, according to McHale, results in an undermining of the reality of the fictional character "[…] by the book's insistence of its *own* reality: its distractingly colored pages and distorted typography, its provocative and apparently irrelevant illustrations, its parallel texts which force the reader to improvise an order of reading, and so on" (180, emphasis in original). The foregrounding of the ontological structure of texts and of fictional worlds problematizes the grasping of postmodernist fiction, as conventions and expectations associated with conventional, "natural,"

[10] Some musicians, composers, and theorists claim that tonality is a natural phenomenon, since it is supposedly based on the harmonic overtone series, which is a natural, acoustic phenomenon. However, as for instance Anthony Storr (1992: 56-64) explains, this claim is unfounded. The intervals that make up tonality only partially match with those given in the harmonic overtone series. Moreover, many forms of non-Western music do not make use of tonality. Does this mean that these musical expressions are less natural than Western music, because these are not based on something supposedly naturally given? I do not think that anyone would want to claim this. Rather, the belief that Western tonality is universal is nothing more than just that: a belief.

"realistic" fiction are not adequate in order to grasp postmodernist fiction. Oftentimes, these conventions and expectations are played with and manipulated, just as many contemporary musical works play with and manipulate musical conventions and expectations in a self-reflexive manner.

According to Grant, another important break with established musical conventions in serialism is the replacement of goal-orientation with nonlinearity (2001: 124-125). In serial music, she argues, the prediction of the course of a serial work remains momentary and is not preconditioned; "[…] we may predict change, but not a particular kind of change" (157). As a result, serial hearing amounts to a conscious concentration, not only on the (lack of) connections between different events, but on the internal structure and character of individual events, as opposed to structural hearing, which is a concentration on the large-scale formal process (161). As a result, Grant contends, in serial music,

> […] notes have an impact on surrounding notes *but this impact is not pre-defined, nor does it relate to a specific semantic system external to the work itself*. This does not imply that past and future are not essential to the perception of new music, but […] there is a difference, What is past conditions how we hear the present, and may increase our expectation of what will come next; but this is a localized process. The description of serial form as moment form in no way contradicts the temporal structure of music – "moment" is itself a temporal category. (159, emphasis in original)

Although I discuss notions such as linearity, goal-directedness, and the musical present extensively in chapters 3 and 4, at this point it is important to stress that serialism, or atonality in general, does not automatically imply nonlinearity. On a harmonic and melodic level, it is often very difficult to make precise predictions on the course an atonal musical work will take. In that sense, one could say that the listener's attention indeed is primarily focused on the moment. Yet, this does not mean that, therefore, the music can in no way be linear or goal-directed. Parameters such as timbre, rhythm, and loudness can elicit linearity, too. But to listen for linearity by focusing on these parameters is quite different from tonal listening, and hence requires some getting used to. Therefore, listeners that are only used to listen to tonal music – which primarily implies a focusing on melody and harmony, although not always – might not regard atonal works as displaying linearity. Consequently, serial music is not "in the moment" exclusively, but might also be regarded as "going somewhere" and "coming from somewhere else," as long as the listener does not limit his/her focus to melody and harmony only.[11]

[11] Integral serial music might problematize my contention, since in this kind of music all musical parameters, and thus timbre and dynamics, too, are organized

In sum, serial music complicates musical comprehension in several ways: firstly, the use of rational compositional methods, such as serial technique, need not necessarily lead to perceptibly rational results. Rather, these methods obscure musical structure, at least when listening to the music. At most, the structure literally becomes visible when studying the score. Secondly, serial technique is not "natural," in the sense that tonal music is regarded as being "natural," i.e. a construction using a tonal order, which is supposedly based on the natural overtone series. What this comes down to is that serial music does not make use of established tonal conventions, which are, consciously or unconsciously, known to the (Western) listener. As a result, tonal music only seems natural because the listener does not have to make a real effort to grasp it, i.e. to structure the music while listening to it. Yet, tonality is just as conventional as any other musical concept is, and atonal music makes the listener aware of this fact, a view that Lachenmann endorses. Lastly, in serial music conventional large-scale forms are abandoned. A large-scale form, such as the sonata, fugue, song, etc., has a clear, perceptible structure to which a listener can hang on. In serial music, however, the whole notion of form, or, perhaps more accurate, of perceptible musical structure, is problematized. Because linearity, goal-directedness, and repetition – those musical characteristics that are vital for the listener during the act of structuring the music – are hard to recognize (and in some cases even absent) in serial and other atonal music, the possibilities to structure the music, and thus to comprehend it, diminish as well.

Comprehensible Surfaces

Serial music is an example of music that is hard to grasp. This kind of music complicates musical comprehension in many ways, as I elaborated above. Serial music is composed by using rational compositional methods that, although perhaps clearly understandable when studying the score, complicate the possibility of comprehending the music when listening to it. The musical structures are often too difficult to grasp, and thus to comprehend, by ear. Yet, while serial, and all atonal, music is harder to comprehend, it is not at all impossible to grasp this music. There are ways in which the listener can structure serial, or atonal, musical works, and thus can comprehend these works. A first step in achieving this is to focus not solely on the melodic and harmonic musical material, but on the other musical parameters as well. In other words: to grasp atonal music, the listener cannot always

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according to rows. As a result, it becomes more problematic to put these parameters into operation in order to elicit some kind of linearity or goal-directedness. Yet, as I will show in chapter 3, a musical past, and thus a "coming from somewhere else," can be discerned in Stockhausen's *Studie II*, which is an integral serial work.

listen to this music in the same manner as s/he listens to tonal pieces. In atonal music, melody and harmony might provide fewer clues than rhythm, loudness, and timbre do.

Fred Lerdahl, however, believes otherwise. He argues that the most important reason that serial music is so difficult, if not impossible, to grasp, is because serial compositional methods cannot be reconstructed by listening to the aural result of that method; serial music "[…] divorces method from intuition" (1988: 235). However, in his assertion Lerdahl relates musical comprehension to the reconstruction of compositional methods. As soon as the listener finds out how a piece is composed, Lerdahl argues, s/he has comprehended the music. In other words: he seems to claim that there is a single, true grasp of music, namely the knowledge of the compositional method. Yet, while knowledge of these methods might be helpful, it is by far not the only means by which the listener can structure the music, and in so doing gains musical comprehension. Rather, musical comprehension can be established through the UNLL-process described above, a process which allows for many different ways to comprehend the same musical piece. Musical comprehension depends on the relation between the (individual) listener and the musical work. Hence, the individual listener has a decisive influence on the way that work is grasped, which in turn results in the existence of many different musical structures by which the music can be grasped and comprehended. But this does not mean that every account of a musical piece is equally valid, although many different accounts of the same composition can exist, which can all be valid. At the same time, however, there are an infinite number of accounts that are unlikely or far-fetched, because these accounts do not bear in any way on the objects – the music, in this case – of which these are accounts.

Lerdahl furthermore states that the musical surface must be available for hierarchical structuring by the listening grammar, a surface that is not available in serial music (239). In his Generative Theory of Tonal Music, or GTTM, Lerdahl contends that the comprehension of music depends on the recognition of hierarchical structures. These structures ultimately can be reduced to an underlying structure, which, according to Michel Imberty, "[…] corresponds to the most abstract and most fundamental organization of the musical piece, and which could perhaps be called […] *the generative structure* of the piece (that which most resembles [Heinrich] Schenker's idea of 'Ursatz')" (1993: 328, emphasis in original). The adjective "generative" in "generative structure," the ultimate structure that has to be recognized in order to gain musical comprehension, refers to a musical origin. Thus, Lerdahl seems to imply that there is only one possible correct way to gain musical comprehension, namely through discovering this origin. Yet, according to Lerdahl, this origin is inaccessible in serial music, for in

this kind of music there is no distinction between musical surface and depth.

Fink relates the idea of music, and art in general, as having both surface and depth, and thus having a hierarchy, to thinking about society:

> The masses are animals, their life is all chaotic surface; only the bourgeois "individual," who, like the musical master-works he loves, has both foreground and background, can "create and transmit connection and coherence." Interiority, structure, hierarchy – these properties not only define the space of the masterwork; they define the psychic space within which we (bourgeois) can experience subjectivity. It is our inner "regions for soul-searching" that make us – and *not* the masses – truly human. (1999: 135, emphasis in original)

Depth and surface are characteristics of both a masterwork and the true bourgeois individual. Both distinguish themselves from the masses. "In the face of hostile, dehumanized mass culture," Fink continues, "the subjectivity and interiority encoded by great art must be defended behind an impregnable skin: a surface-as-boundary that, though confusing and complex to the uninitiated, possesses the solid integrity of total organization" (136). According to Fink, those who regard music as being hierarchically structured, implicitly argue that a musical surface is necessary for the protection of a musical depth:

> Hierarchic music theories ask us to renounce the pleasures of the surface for the defensive security of the depths. We may not all want to make the exchange. Perhaps, after all, beauty is only skin-deep. Even in music. (137)

Thus, Fink questions the value of hierarchical structuring of music, and asks whether concentrating on the musical surface alone might be more valuable.

Maus believes that this indeed might be the case:

> Many writers seem to regard analytical experience as the source of musical comprehension, and use the musical surface as a mere source of data, rather than as the place where experience and enquiry should come to rest. (1999: 178)

Instead of trying to distill some deep structure out of the musical sounds – a structure that is not to be found in the music itself, but rather is a fabrication of the analyst – these sounds themselves should be the start and finish of musical analysis and the source for musical comprehension. Maus proposes to concentrate on the listening experience, which amounts to a concentration on the musical surface,

rather than on the compositional methods, even when discussing serial music:

> On the one hand, a twelve-tone piece may seem convincing, unified, and beautiful; on the other hand, the twelve-tone patterning seems undeniable. So, one feels bound to admit, somehow the patterning must explain the experiences, including the feeling of unity. One should resist such hypothetical analytical explanations – not primarily because they are false (though I think they are not known to be true), but because they change the subject of analysis, leading away from the articulation of experienced qualities of music. (176)

In his view, musical listening experiences should be not just the testing ground, but also the main subject matter, of musical analysis and criticism. Maus asserts that the central task in critical writing about music is to articulate and communicate musical experience, not to reconstruct the genealogy of a musical piece. Musical comprehension, which is a part of musical experience, does not depend on knowledge of compositional methods.[12] Grant argues along the same lines. She maintains that the use of the row is a constraint on the composer; it is not the aim of serialism that an educated listener could recognize the row and hear how this row is being permutated during the course of a composition (2001: 219). In other words: the recognition of rows and their permutations – and thus the compositional method – is not the same as grasping and comprehending serial music.

Yet, is it possible to grasp and comprehend serial music altogether? Is it possible to structure this kind of music only by listening to it? John Snyder seems to doubt this. He argues that serial music lacks any clear patterning,[13] which makes it very difficult for the listener to memorize this music; serial music "sabotages human memory":

> Often referred to as "existing in the present only," it provides either no memorable patterns or no basis for expectation, or both. This lack of memorability also tends to emphasize the qualities of individual acoustical events, rather than their relationship to each other as parts of larger patterns. (2000: 66)[14]

Snyder thus claims that serial music cannot be structured, which implies that it cannot be comprehended, either.

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[12] Yet, on the other hand, knowledge of the compositional method might influence the way the listener grasps the music.

[13] As I explained above, the music might be clearly patterned because of the use of a rational compositional method, yet this patterning is too complicated to be grasped by the ear.

[14] I will discuss in depth the notion of the musical present in chapter 3.

Imberty, however, thinks otherwise. He asserts, after conducting experiments in which listeners have to identify dodecaphonic series and their permutations in serial compositions, that serial music can be patterned after all. The structuring of serial music can be done by concentrating on the melodic, rhythmic and dynamic features of the music – which are all perceptible at the musical surface – rather than on the stabilities or instabilities defined by scalar hierarchies. He concludes that

> [a]tonal musical structure [the grasping of which leads to musical comprehension] rests on other polarities, not situated at the level of the series itself which hence cannot serve as a prototype or frame of reference in perception and memory. (1993: 327)

This structure is always provisional, and always modifiable from hearing, which, according to Imberty, is one of the characteristics of atonal music, and "[…] more specifically of serial music, which is extremely fluid for the hearer, to have no definitive structure" (331). As a result,

> […] it is clear that the perception and comprehension of atonal music remains more uncertain, or if you prefer, more and more open than the perception and comprehension of tonal music. The role of the listener, with his past, his culture, his knowledge, is more important in this case. (336)

Just as I argued above, Imberty holds that musical structuring depends both on the music, the individual listener, and the cultural and social circumstances in which the music is listened to. As a result, several different manners in which to grasp and comprehend the same musical piece can, and will, exist. And in serial, or any kind of atonal music, this diversity might even be greater. Nevertheless, atonal music can be comprehended in the same manner, although comprehension might be harder to achieve in this kind of music than it is in tonal music.

Narrative Structuring

During a musical listening experience, which – as I explained above – can be regarded as a unifying activity, the listener tries to structure the music. And although in this experience the UNLL-process is always involved, the strategies used to structure the music may differ from listener to listener. Maus suggests that a narrative strategy might be successful in helping to structure the music:

> [T]he association of music with a story is a way of attributing musical unity: the parts of a story belong together, somehow, and in associating music and story one is, somehow, transferring that unity to a musical context. Second, as I understand it, the notion of a musical story is not an alternative to the

> notions of musical experiences or musical world. They are related as follows: a listener may have a unified experience, and that experience may include the imagining of a fictional world, and the events within that fictional world may form a story. (1999: 182-183)

In the course of a musical listening experience, a listener might regard the music s/he is listening to as a story, i.e. structure the music as if it were a musical narrative. In this way, the music is regarded as a structural whole, namely a narrative, and, consequently, musical comprehension might be gained. Thus, perhaps a narrative listening stance, i.e. a stance in which the listener tries to grasp the music as a narrative, might help the listener in comprehending contemporary, atonal music as well. In the following chapters, I will discuss the possibilities of narrativity in music, and in contemporary music in particular. I propose that a narrative listening stance indeed might aid in comprehending atonal music. But before discussing this, I will address the question what narrative comprehension might comprise. What does it mean to grasp something in a narrative manner?

David Herman observes that human beings often interpret events by creating stories around them in order to get some kind of grasp of these events: "As accounts of what to particular people in particular circumstances and with specific consequences, stories are found in every culture and subculture and can be viewed as a basic human strategy for coming to terms with time, process, and change" (2003a: 2). Moreover, Kitty Klein adds that "[n]arrative has often been viewed as the product of a universal human need to communicate with others and to make sense of the world" (2003: 65). Stories are important both in grasping the world and in communicating this grasp. Thus, broadly speaking, there are two functions of narrative, which are interrelated: on the one hand, narrative can be regarded as a means to make sense of the world, to structure the human subject's experiences and to integrate these into a graspable whole. On the other hand, narrative functions as an account with which the human subject can make the events s/he undergoes discursive, i.e. to turn them into experiences. As Herman puts it: "[N]arrative is at once a class of (cultural) artifacts and a cognitive-communicative process for creating, identifying, and interpreting candidate members of that artifactual class" (2003b: 170). Stories are both cultural objects and the manner in which human subjects talk about those objects.

Roy Schafer remarks that narrative is not an alternative to truth or reality; rather, "[…] it is a mode in which, inevitably, truth and reality are presented. We have only versions of the true and the real […] Each retelling amounts to an account of the prior telling" (quoted in Frawley, Murray, and Smith 2003: 88-89). Narrative is the manner in which the individual subject has access to other people's experiences;

it is a way to distribute experiences and knowledge. Through stories, Herman contends, human subjects have "[…] a way of structuring the individual-environment nexus, constituting a principled basis for sharing the work of thought" (2003b: 185). Moreover, Herman continues, via stories the subject can have access to events that are separated from him/her in time and/or space:

> [N]arrative can be seen to facilitate intelligent behavior. Stories support the (social) process by which the meaning of events is determined and evaluated, enable the distribution of knowledge of events via storytelling acts more or less widely separated from those events in time and space, and assist with the regulation of communicative behaviors, such that the actions of participants in knowledge-yielding and -conveying talk can be coordinated. (2003a: 8)

In short: stories are an effective means by which knowledge, experience, beliefs, desires, and fantasies can be represented. It is one of the most important means by which human beings communicate. Narrative is an instrument for distributing and elaborating the perspectives that can be adopted on a given set of events. Moreover, stories aid in enriching the whole of the past, present, and possible future events that constitutes the foundation of human knowledge. Narrative, Herman concludes, therefore serves a dual function:

> […] correcting for biases and limitations that can result from a particular cognizer's efforts to know; and integrating such individual efforts into a larger human project that takes its character from the way it is ongoingly distributed in social and historical space. In short, the process of telling and interpreting stories inserts me into the environment I strive to know, teaching me that I do not know my world if I consider myself somehow outside of or beyond that world. (2003b: 184-185)

By producing and listening to narratives, the subject places him/herself within a social environment; through stories both his/her particular place can be articulated, and knowledge of this environment can be gained.

Klein furthermore adds that "[o]ne of the marvelous features of narrative is that it can transform memories of unspeakably awful experiences into streamlined representations that lose their ability to derail cognition" (2003: 65). Thus, in addition to the possibility narrative offers to a subject to place him/herself within a social environment, narrative aids in coping with traumatic, or otherwise horrible, events. By creating a narrative around a stressful or traumatic event, Klein remarks, psychological wellbeing is enhanced by involving the subject's cognitive functions: "[M]any psychologists believe that in addition to helping people understand stressful events,

narrative changes the memory representations of these events, making them less likely to erupt into consciousness" (77). By consciously integrating a traumatic event into a narrative frame, the subject might be able to control his/her trauma.[15]

When a subject tries to make sense of events through the creation of a narrative, s/he has an inclination to construct a story that is as clear and simple as possible, H. Porter Abbott contends: "[A]s a general rule, human beings have a cognitive bias toward the clarity of linear narrative in the construction of knowledge" (2003: 143). Because narrative basically is nothing more than a "[…] basic pattern-forming cognitive system bearing on sequences experienced through time" (Herman 2003b: 170), the subject tries to structure these sequences in the most straightforward way possible, which is in a linear fashion. If possible, s/he interprets succeeding events as the former being the cause of the appearance of the next, as Klein explains: "Identification of causal relations is particularly important for narrative […], because to understand the text the reader must make numerous inferences to establish the relations between various parts of the narrative" (2003: 75). Thus, causal relation is one of the most important kinds of structuring relations within a narrative. Richard J. Gerrig and Giovanna Egidi acknowledge this:

> [Research has] provided evidence that one product of readers' narrative experiences are *causal networks* that represent the relationships between the causes and consequences of events in a story. Some story events form the main *causal chain* of the story whereas others, with respect to causality, are dead ends. When asked to recall stories, readers find it relatively more difficult to produce details that are not along that main causal chain. (2003: 44, emphasis in original)

Stories in which events are represented that are hard to connect causally are not as easily remembered as stories whose events can be causally related. This implies that stories that show many causal relations can be grasped in a clearer way than those that lack these relations. Klein elaborates how a subject detects causal relations:

> To detect causal relation, the reader must connect inferences from immediately preceding text still in working memory, information from earlier text, now located in long term memory […], and background knowledge that was not in the text but that is also in long term memory. (2003: 75)

[15] In chapter 5, I will discuss the relation between trauma and narrative frame more extensively.

As I will show in the next chapter, this process is similar to the process of detecting musical events within a composition that is aurally consumed.

In that chapter, I will also explain that the notion of musical causation is used as a metaphor. Musical events do not actually, physically cause other musical events; they can only be interpreted as being a cause. Yet, as Herman observes, this is not only the case in music, but in literary narrative, too. In paraphrasing Roland Barthes, he remarks that

> […] narrative understanding depends fundamentally on a generalized heuristic according to which interpreters assume that if *Y* is mentioned after *X* in a story, then *X* not only precedes but also causes *Y*. Indeed, one can detect the operation of this same heuristic in a variety of discourse contexts, as when language users are able to "read in" temporal and causal relations in the case of conjunctions that do not contain explicit time-indices or markers of causality. (2003b: 176)

A narrative can be understood because its succeeding events can be interpreted as being related in a causal manner, regardless of this relation is a reality or a projection of the apprehending subject. Hence, music that can be interpreted as containing events that are somehow – metaphorically – causally related might be more easily grasped as well.

Yet, can any object that is not a literal narrative, such as music, be interpreted in a narrative manner, which might result in a more profound comprehension of this object? Monika Fludernik believes this is possible. She contends that narrativity "[…] is not a quality adhering to a text, but rather an attribute imposed on the text by the reader who interprets the text *as narrative*, thus *narrativizing* the text" (2003: 244, emphasis in original). Thus, in the case of literature, it is the reading process that is "[…] fundamental to the construction of narrativity – that which makes a narrative narrative" (244). The act of narrativizing makes an object narrative, Fludernik argues, rather than narrativity being a characteristic inherent in the object itself. She thus seems to imply that the object itself is irrelevant to narrativity; it is only the act of the observer that makes an object into a narrative. Yet, is it possible to narrativize, say, an ordinary coffee cup? Perhaps stories around this cup could be made up, but the cup itself probably cannot be interpreted as a story. The object itself, too, has to have some qualities that invite the observer to regard this object as a narrative. The object has to have a narrative potentiality. Not just anything can be narrativized, only because the observer wants to. Nevertheless, I assert that music does have this narrative potentiality, which invites the listener to narrativization, and that it is possible to narrativize many musical compositions, and even many contemporary, atonal works.

The narrativization of cultural objects amounts to the creation of a construction, a structure in which (causal and other) temporal relations between events are identified. Some objects can more easily be regarded as narrative than other objects. Narrative depends on both the narrative potentiality of the object and the act of narrativization of that object by an observer in order for that object to become a narrative. By narrativizing an object, for instance an atonal musical work, the listener might comprehend this music in a better, or different, way than when assuming another listening stance. Turning atonal music into a story means establishing some kind of grasp of the music, a comprehension of something that, because of its apparent discontinuity and chaos, seems to be ungraspable.

A musical listening experience is the recognition of its constituent sounds as musical sounds, and the ability to relate musical phrases to other phrases within the same piece, and to other musical works or practices, nonmusical ideas and/or phenomena. Experiencing a musical piece also implies having grasped and comprehended this piece, for after this experience the music is structured and made discursive. Contemporary, atonal music complicates musical comprehension, because it sometimes uses sounds that are not conventionally associated with music. Moreover, atonal music does not make use of established tonal conventions and musical forms, with which the listener is familiar, and this makes it more difficult to structure the music. However, as I contended above, and as confirmed by Imberty's experiments, it is not impossible to do. It is important to listen to atonal music in a different manner than to tonal music, which generally means a focus not primarily on pitch – and thus on melody and harmony, but equally on other musical parameters, such as rhythm, loudness, and timbre as well. In this way, the listener might recognize relations that might have eluded him/her if s/he had just concentrated on pitch.

A possible way to structure music is to narrativize it, i.e. to regard it as a narrative. A narrative can be regarded as a structure in which (causal and other) relations between events are identified. Evidently, some objects can be more easily regarded as a narrative than other objects. Yet, since narrative is not exclusively a characteristic inherent in an object, but also depends on the act of narrativization of that object in order for that object to become a narrative, music might be narrative, too. Narrative depends on the relation between object and observer. By narrativizing an object, for instance an atonal musical work, the listener might get a better, or different, grasp of it. Turning atonal music into a story means establishing some kind of control, of comprehension, over the music, creating a sense of certainty in an

uncertain situation, which listening to atonal music sometimes might be.

However, in so doing, the listener assumes a "classical" listening stance, in the sense that s/he is trying to recognize structures in atonal music that are traditionally associated with tonal musical works that are composed by using functional harmony. Oftentimes, this kind of music can, with little effort, be interpreted as being teleological; generally, it is predominantly linear and goal-directed. Thus, in a way, when narrativizing contemporary atonal music, the listener is in fact "assimilating," as it were, this music within the classical tradition. At the end of this study, I will discuss this issue more extensively, but for now I just want to remark that I do not want to argue that a narrative listening stance is the only possible stance the listener can assume when trying to comprehend contemporary music. It is, however, a stance that might seriously enrich the listener's grasp of music in general, and of contemporary music in particular.

In the next chapter, I will discuss what it means to regard a musical work as a narrative, by translating the theory of narrative into a theory of musical narrativity. In so doing, I will try to respect the differences between literature and music, in order to avoid a "literarization" (not to be confused with narrativization) of music. For, as Hayden White warns:

> [I]t should be remembered that the very effort to import literary theory into musicology implies fundamental differences between literature and music. It is unlikely that any set of critical or theoretical principles devised to deal primarily with verbal discourse can effectively address the principal problems of musical criticism and theory. (1999: 176)

We will find out whether this holds for musical narrativity, too.

2 TALES

A Narratological Trichotomy

A piece of music starts at a given moment, manifests itself for a certain amount of time, and finally ends. In between the beginning and the ending, sounds can be heard. Because of the succession of sounds the listener gets the impression the music, constituted by these sounds, is moving forward. Often, during the listening, the listener has certain expectations about the direction the music will take while moving forward, and these expectations are either met or not. Unexpected moments may shed new light on moments that have already passed, while fulfillment of expectations may offer consolidation. It is the sum of all these, and other, musical characteristics that suggest that music tells a story. Yet, narrativity is usually associated with verbal and visual texts. Moreover, the mere possibility of there being something like musical narrativity is highly debated (see for instance Nattiez 1990). Nevertheless, I will discuss many of these suggestive musical characteristics in this chapter, by investigating which narrative elements can be identified in a musical piece.[1] According to Mieke Bal, "[n]arratology can be used on other objects than just narrative texts, just as narrative texts can sometimes be better approached with other methods than narratological" (1990: 730). With the aid of narratology, the narrative aspect of objects can be studied, regardless of whether they are linguistic or other. And I see no a priori objection why music could not have such a narrative aspect.

I propose the following working definition of a narrative, which is derived from Bal's narratology: a narrative is the representation of a temporal development. It is the representation of a succession of events that succeed each other in time. Thus, the construction of a house, say, can be regarded as a succession of events, but it is not a narrative. Rather, it is a process. But as soon as I record this process on video, for instance, this recording can be regarded as a narrative. After all, now we have a representation, namely a video recording, of a temporal development, i.e. the construction of a house.

Drama, however, is not narrative, although it can contain narrative moments. Drama might in many cases be regarded as a temporal development, thus as a transformation from one state to another, but it is not a representation. Rather, it is a presentation, or a demonstration, of this development. Lyric poetry, on the other hand, might be a representation, but not all lyric poems can be regarded as the

[1] In chapter 6, I will discuss Nattiez's arguments against musical narrativity.

representation of temporality, or of a temporal development. This is not to say that lyric poetry, or fragments within a lyric poem, can never be regarded as representations of a temporal development. In these cases one might conclude that this particular poem has narrative moments or characteristics. Conversely, novels such as Samuel Beckett's *The Unnameable* (1953, English translation 1958) and James Joyce's *Finnegans Wake* (1939) problematize the notion of temporal development in narrative. Yet, this does not automatically imply that the working definition of narrative I gave above has to be revised. Rather, it shows why these novels are not novels in any conventional sense: because they do not neatly fit into the category called narrative. Chronologies, time tables, and weather reports, lastly, are representations and do refer to temporal phenomena. Yet, to what extent can these objects be considered as representations of temporal developments? As I explained in the previous chapter, causality plays an important part in narrative. Because one can identify particular events as (metaphorically) causing other events the perceiving subject is able to regard this succession of events as constituting a development, a transformation from one state to another. Thus, if it is possible to identify causal relations within a chronology or a time table, one could conclude that this object is, to a certain degree, narrative. But I cannot say a priori whether or not these objects can be regarded as such. This depends on the particular representation that is considered. However, as I will try to show in this chapter, many musical compositions can be regarded as representations of a temporal development, and therefore as narratives.

In literary theory, there exists a plurality of narratological theories, such as structuralist, poststructuralist, psychoanalytic and contextualist.[2] Many of those theories can be useful for the study of musical narratology, and some are discussed in later chapters. In this chapter, however, I am looking for a structuralist theory that literally decomposes a narrative into its individual "building blocks," and names them. In the theory developed by Shlomith Rimmon-Kenan, for instance, a distinction is made between story, text and narration. Story is the set of "[…] narrated events and participants in abstraction from the text" (1983: 6), text is the observable and object-like aspect of verbal narrative, and narration is the act of telling (6-8). Rimmon-Kenan goes on to identify elements such as deep and surface structures, functions, characters, focalization, and narrative levels. Bal (1997) distinguishes similar, though not identical, narrative elements. Her theory is more or less based on the theories developed by Gérard Genette, and is more systematic than Rimmon-Kenan's. In her 1997 study, Bal aims at giving "[…] a systematic account of a theory of

[2] See *Poetics Today* 11 (1990) for a survey of literary narratological theories.

narrative for use in the study of literature and other narrative texts" (ix). Bal's narratological theory indeed offers a very elaborate account of narrative elements in a systematic fashion, and therefore her theory functions as the starting point of my investigation here.

A narrative text, according to Bal, is a text in which an agent relates a story in a particular medium. She distinguishes three layers in such a narrative text: text, story and fabula. A text is a finite, structured whole composed of language signs. A story is a fabula that is presented in a certain manner, and a fabula is a series of logically and chronologically related events that are caused or experienced by actors. An event is defined as a transition from one state to another state, whereas an actor is an agent that performs actions. To act, lastly, means to cause or to experience an event (1997: 5).

The strict division of a narrative text into three layers is something that is typical for Bal's theory. Genette also distinguishes between three layers, but not in a consequent manner. According to his theory narratives exist that only have two layers. In his 1972 study, Genette argues that the middle level, "story," can be absent. In that case there is zero-focalization, as he calls it. Rimmon-Kenan's trichotomy, on the other hand, is not rigorous in the sense that the level of narration is of a different ontological category than the other two levels.

In music, too, identifying three different narrative levels is no common practice. A musical piece is regarded as consisting of at most two levels. Anthony Newcomb, for instance, argues that, in a musical piece, "[t]he individual series of events […] becomes a coherent story to the extent that we interpret its events according to sets of relatively conventional narrative paradigms" (1987: 166).[3] Newcomb calls the act of interpreting the succession of musical events as a coherent story the listener's "narrative activity." According to him, this narrative activity

> […] is stimulated by the challenge involved in patterning events into a series which is coherent and comprehensible as an intentional human action. The series might well outline some archetypical plot, but this plot need not be fleshed out with specific detail. (1994: 86)

Newcomb regards a musical text as a series of events, which can be interpreted as a coherent story, out of which the listener can distill an archetypical plot. Therefore, in his view, a musical text consists of two levels: a level that consists of a series of events, and the plot level, with the plot being an extract of the aforementioned level.

[3] Newcomb here seems to presuppose that a listener always intentionally wants to hear a story in music, which might be too strong a claim, as I will explain below.

Gregory Karl, on the other hand, regards musical plot as the organizing principle of a musical work. He claims that the study of musical narrativity is

> […] the effort to integrate structural and semantic-expressive aspects of musical works in the act of analysis by developing concepts capable of functioning simultaneously in both domains. Musical plot, defined as the integrated formal and semantic content of a musical work, is the most inclusive concept of this kind: the Ursatz of musical narrative, and a symbol of aspiration toward a grand unified theory of musical processes. The quest is to formulate viable models of plot and so give shape to what is as yet only an intriguing abstraction, is among the more formidable challenges in music theory. (1997: 14-15)

For Karl, a plot has to contain the nucleus, as it were, of a musical piece. He intends to integrate into his conception of plot both the structural, i.e. the syntactical, and the semantic aspects of a musical piece, in order to formulate an all-encompassing musical theory. The musical plot, as he conceives it, has to be able to account for both the form and the meaning of music. While this is a very ambitious goal, and structuralist in its approach, it is also different from the conception of plot, or fabula as Bal calls it, which I will describe below.

John Dack distinguishes between narrative and story, as does Jann Pasler. Narrative, according to Dack,

> […] is not synonymous with any "story" as such though the two concepts are connected. If a story is that specific sequence which is being related or recounted, narrative can be defined as the active process of communication by which this takes place. Narrative is abstract: story is concrete. A story will generally consist of a series of events, which characters experience and initiate in a certain, often logical, order. Even allowing for techniques such as flashbacks, nested structures and extended descriptive passages the reader can generally understand why events occur in a certain order. (1999: 2)

Dack defines story and narrative in the same manner as Rimmon-Kenan does: story is a certain content, and narrative is the act in which that content is communicated. Dack thus does recognize a story level in music, but he does not acknowledge that, below the story level, a fabula exists. Moreover, he skips the text level and moves straight on to the act of communication itself, bypassing the medium in which the story is told. This is an omission that can be found in the theories of Newcomb and Karl, too.

Jann Pasler seems to equate story with Bal's fabula and narrative with Bal's conception of story:

> A number of relationships between narrative and story can be manipulated when both are seen as inherently meaningful […] Concordances and

> discordances […] may be constructed between the temporal order of events in the story and the pseudotemporal order of their arrangement in the discourse, the duration of events in the story and in the telling, as well as the frequency of repetition in both. If one views the standard idea of a sonata form as a work's underlying signified, then any rearrangement of parts, such as placing a final cadence at a work's beginning, can be discussed in this regard. (1989: 238)

Pasler speaks about the manipulation of relationships between narrative and story, while Bal discusses ways in which the story can rearrange the events of the fabula. The remarks Pasler makes regarding the concordances and discordances that can be constructed are relevant, and are elaborated below, but because she writes about narrative, story and "telling," without properly defining these terms, a more precise approach has to be chosen.

It is exactly because Bal's narratology consists of a trichotomy, rather than a dichotomy, that it is an appropriate model for the study of musical narrativity, and any narrative object in general. Especially when it concerns narrativity and intermediality, this trichotomy is crucial. If one were to use a theory based on a dichotomy, it would be very difficult, and perhaps even impossible, to discuss, in a precise manner, the consequences of relating the same story in different media. For, in this case, one only can distinguish between a fabula and narration, and with each change of the medium the entire narration changes as well, since text and story are conflated in this level. And, even more importantly, a trichotomy allows one to distinguish between the one who speaks (the narrator on the text level) and the one who perceives (the focalizor on the story level).

Thus, the division of a musical text into three, instead of two or no, layers results in a more precise approach to musical narrativity. Such an approach may account for the way in music, as perceptible sounds, the listener recognizes a musical structure, and how s/he distils from this a series of logically and chronologically related musical events that are caused or experienced by musical actors. This top-down approach is similar to the one that Bal proposes. She regards her theory as "[…] a readerly device, a heuristic tool that provides focus to the expectations with which readers process narrative" (1997: xv). Her theory follows the order in which the reader gets access to and experiences a narrative text, for "[i]t is by way of the text that the reader has access to the story, of which the fabula is, so to speak, a memorial trace that remains with the reader after completion of the reading" (xv).

The trichotomy musical text – story – fabula can be roughly equated with the trichotomy "perceptible sounds" – "musical structure" – "a series of logically and chronologically related musical events that are

caused or experienced by musical actors." This trichotomy, however, requires further elaboration, for we have to define notions like musical events and musical actors in order to fully understand what this trichotomy can tell us about musical narrativity. In this chapter, I will do just that by following the top-down approach sketched above. Therefore, I will start with the musical text.

Musical Text

When Bal states that a narrative text is a text in which an agent relates a story in a particular medium, several questions arise when we want to use this definition as a starting point for a definition of a musical narrative text. First, we have to make clear what a musical text is. Bal defines text as a finite, structured whole composed of language signs (1997: 5). When translated to music, a musical text can thus be regarded as a finite, structured whole composed of musical signs.

In discussing the concept of musical text, Robert Samuels states that "[…] a necessary assumption of musical narrativity [is] that music is textual, in the sense of defining relations and articulating codes in a genuinely semiotic fashion" (1994: 152), but that "[…] a musical text […] is not a mere sequence of sounds any more than a literary text is a sequence of words" (154). At first sight, this definition seems to contradict Bal's conception of a text. After all, Samuels claims that a musical text is more than a sequence of sounds, while Bal defines a text as a finite, structured whole composed of language signs. Now, a sign is not equivalent to a word, and a language sign is not a word, per se; a language sign is more comprehensive than a word. Samuels, however, does seem to emphasize in a stronger way that a text is more than the words or sounds it consists of than Bal does. The reason for this difference might be that Samuels regards a musical text in a Derridean sense, in that music can be located within all other discourses, "[…] whilst insisting on its self-demarcation" (154). He sees a musical text as inextricably connected with all other texts and discusses musical texts in this fashion. Bal, on the other hand, focuses on the internal traits of texts. But this does not mean that text is no more than just a structured whole for her; she acknowledges that

> [t]he finite ensemble of signs does not mean that the text itself is finite, for its meanings, effects, functions, and background are not. It only means that there is a first and a last word to be identified; a first and a last image of a film; a frame of a painting, even if those boundaries […] are not watertight. (1997: 5)

As a result, Bal's conception is not incompatible with Samuels's. It is just that, in her definition, she focuses primarily on the structural

aspects of a text, while not ignoring those aspects that are not explicitly named by the definition.[4]

The Uttering Body in Music

The next question in relation to Bal's definition of a narrative text is how one can define an agent that "relates a story in a particular medium" in music. According to Bal, such an agent is the narrator. To be more precise, a narrator is "[…] that agent which utters the linguistic signs which constitute the text or the equivalent of that agent in other media" (1997: 18). This means that in the case of a musical text, a narrator is that agent that utters the musical signs that constitute the musical text. One should be careful not to assume that a narrator is a person of some sort: a narrator is a function, "[…] and not a person, which expresses itself in the language that constitutes the text" (16). The musical narrator is not the composer him/herself, either, just as in literary texts the narrator is not the writer.

In the case of literature, we need a narrator to turn words into a narrative text. Non-linguistic texts also need a narrator in order to become narrative. In her 2002 study on collecting, Bal puts this very clearly. In discussing the possibility of regarding collecting in a narrative manner, she defines the narrator as "[d]as semiotische Subjekt, von dem diese Darstellung [the relating of a story through signs that are comprehensible – "verständlich" – for others] hervorgebracht oder geäußert wird" (2002: 123), hence, as the semiotic subject that relates a story through signs that are comprehensible for others. She claims that collecting only becomes narrative as soon as a series of unplanned purchases suddenly changes into a meaningful set. This, writes Bal, is the moment in which a narrator begins to tell the story of this set and thus produces the semiotics for this story (124). That this narrator is neither the collector nor the objects in the collection, can be read in her remark that, as soon the narrator is telling the story, we can also look at the collection from the perspectives of the collector and of the objects that are part of this collection, in addition to looking at the collection from the perspective of the narrator (124). So, here, it is not the two elements that are necessary for the collection to exist, i.e. the collector and the collected items, that are considered to be the narrators. The narrator is a function that is posited in a text, as soon as this text is considered to be narrative, but is not assigned to the elements that are essential for the physical existence of the text. Likewise in music the composer and performer, the

[4] Bal emphasizes, for instance, that structural analysis is not, and cannot be, ahistorical, as she demonstrates while analyzing the narrative traits in *I'm Six Years Old and Hiding behind My Hands* (1996), an artwork by Ken Aptekar (see Bal 1997: 66-75).

elements that are essential for the existence of a musical piece, are not necessarily the narrator, either.

Bal distinguishes between an external and a character-bound narrator. An external narrator is a narrator that does not take part in the narrative, whereas a character-bound narrator is a narrator and at the same time a character within the narrative which it narrates (1997: 22). Furthermore, while a narrator is always present in a narrative, it does not have to be perceptible. An external narrator that does not explicitly refer to itself in a narrative is considered imperceptible (22). An imperceptible external narrator is a narrator that remains unmentioned. On the other hand, because a character-bound narrator is at the same time a character in the narrative, this implies that a character-bound narrator is always perceptible. The reverse, of course, does not automatically hold: a perceptible narrator is not always a character-bound narrator. An external narrator can explicitly refer to itself, while not taking part in the narrative. In other words, there is a visible "I" that utters the words that constitute the narrative, but that "I" is not a character in the story it is telling (21-22). Furthermore, a narrative is not restricted to having a single narrator only. One or more narrative levels may exist in a work, each with its own narrator (43-52).

An example of a narrative in which more than one narrator is posited is Ian McEwan's *Enduring Love* (1997). The novel is for the greater part told by a character-bound narrator, as the opening sentences of the novel illustrate:

> The beginning is simple to mark. We were in sunlight under a turkey oak, partly protected from a strong, gusty wind. I was kneeling on the grass with a corkscrew in my hand, and Clarissa was passing me the bottle – a 1987 Daumas Gassac. This was the moment, this was the pinprick on the time map: I was stretching out my hand, and as the cool neck and the black foil touched my palm, we heard a man's shout. (1)

Here, a visible "I" is relating the story, and at the same time this "I," whose name is Joe, is also a character in the narrative he is telling. Not the entire novel, however, is related via this character-bound narrator. Chapter 9, for instance, begins with the following statement from Joe: "It would make more sense of Clarissa's return to tell it from her point of view. Or at least, from that point as I later construed it" (79), and continues in third person, as the example below shows:

> He is for the moment conversationally deaf and blind, so Clarissa raises both hands, palms turned outward in surrender and says, "That's great, Joe. I'm going to take a bath." Even then, he does not stop, and probably has not heard. As she turns to go towards the bedroom, he walks behind her, and follows her in, telling her over and over in different ways that he has to go back into science. (81)

Were it not for the first sentence of this chapter, the reader could assume that this chapter is related via an imperceptible external narrator. There is no visible "I" that is telling the story; the "I" in the first two examples has changed into "he" and "Joe." The first two sentences of this chapter, however, complicate things. One could argue that, in this chapter, the story is still related through a character-bound narrator, since the chapter starts with an "I" – Joe – and this "I" remains a character in the story that is told. One could also argue that the chapter is related via a perceptible external narrator, for the narrator is visible – the "I" in the beginning of the chapter – and tells about a Joe he does no longer identifies with, thus who is in fact someone else than the narrator. I myself opt for the second explanation.

The narrative as a whole is related via an imperceptible external narrator, although the greater part of the novel consists of the story as told by Joe. The novel, however, also contains a chapter with a different narrator, two chapters that both consist entirely of a letter written by a character called Jed, a chapter that consists entirely of a letter written by Clarissa, and two appendices, of which one is a scientific article and one a letter from Jed that has never been sent. When we consider these appendices to be part of the narrative, then we can no longer assume that the narrative is related via a character-bound narrator, i.e. Joe. There has to be an external organizing function that relates all these parts, which together constitute the narrative. This function is not perceptible, for the chapters that consist of the letters are not in some way introduced by a narrator, the two appendices are introduced without referring to an "I," and in the other chapters the only perceptible narrator is the character-bound narrator called Joe. Therefore, it has to be an imperceptible external narrator that relates the narrative as a whole.

The way the function of narrator can be assigned in non-literary texts is shown in Bal's analysis of Ken Aptekar's artwork *I'm Six Years Old and Hiding behind My Hands* (1996), a mixed-media work that consists of a painting that depicts a part of an other painting, hanging on a wall, and a text that is sandblasted onto glass plates that are mounted in front of the painting. In the painting that is depicted a woman is shown, while the text on the glass is written in first person. According to Bal, in this work a character-bound narrator is posited in the linguistic text. Because the painted woman that is depicted is portrayed as a female painter during the act of painting, she figures as a character-bound narrator as well. An embedded external narrator, a narrator that does not take part in the story itself, is posited in the painting that depicts the painting hanging on a wall, and, lastly, a mixed-media external narrator is posited in the embedding text of the work as a whole (1997: 68). Despite all these narrators, one could question the narrativity of this work. Does it really represent a

temporal development, or is it more like the description of a certain situation? Is it perhaps just the representation of a single event, rather than the representation of a sequence of events? I do not try to answer these questions at this time, since my only aim here is to give an example of the way the function of narrator is assigned in a non-literary text. And it is clear from this analysis that the external narrators that are posited in this work are not assigned to elements that are necessary for the existence of the work. Neither are the character-bound narrators, although these narrators can be pointed out distinctly, as opposed to the external narrators, which are imperceptible here.

The composer and performer do not automatically equal the function of narrator. A musical narrator, as long as it is an imperceptible one, cannot be pointed out distinctly in the music itself or in a performance situation, and is instead posited in the musical text as a whole, or in the embedded text in the case of an embedded narrator, as soon as this text is considered to be narrative. A perceptible narrator, on the other hand, can be pointed out in the music – which makes sense, for if this were not possible, then the narrator would not be perceptible.

Many theorists regard the musical narrator as being an imperceptible external narrator only. Eero Tarasti, for instance, discusses the musical narrator in the following fashion:

> [I]t is the intentional subject emerging from the cooperation between composer, performer, and listener, and living in the no-man's land between them, who is the subject properly speaking and who programs musical actors on the textual level. This subject places musical theme-actors in different narrative situations: one as a sender, the other as a receiver, one as a subject, the other as object, some in the role of opponent, some in the figures of Battle, return, Victory, Destruction, or Glorification. (1994: 111)

In his Greimasian account of musical narrativity, Tarasti describes how a subject is posited as a result of the interplay between composer, performer and listener, a subject that assigns actantial functions to musical phrases. This subject, however, is not to be found in the music itself, but instead is posited in the musical text, just like an imperceptible external narrator.

Lawrence Kramer also argues that a musical narrator is not a function that can be pointed out in the music itself:

> Even in the most literal-minded program music, the musical narrator is […] a "shadow" cast by the listener […] [T]he musical subject speaks with the kind of anonymous voice typical of literary discourse set in the ongoing present: the depersonalized yet intimate voice of lyric poetry or the uncannily blank voice of third-person present-tense narration. (1995: 199-120)

Kramer equals a musical narrator to something that is posited in the music by the listener. Moreover, it seems as if Kramer asserts that this narrator is always an imperceptible external narrator. Furthermore, he explains that the listener posits this narrator due to his/her will "[…] to humanize [the] figure [of the musical narrator], to make it the vehicle of what [Edward T.] Cone calls the composer's voice" (120). Because the listener wishes to hear the composer in the music s/he is hearing, a narrator is posited.

Cone's account resembles that of the implied author, which Bal describes as follows:

> It [the term "implied author"] suggests that the biographical author has a textual delegate behind which she can hide, a guarantee of discretion and cultural politeness morphed into a methodological *de jure* argument. But what the term really does is much more fundamental. This concept de facto operated the switch, not really from author to text as was the overt claim, but from author as speaker of the text to reader who construes an image of that person. The reading, the concept promised, would give all information, relevant and desired, about who "spoke" the narrative. Any questions beyond what about who wrote the book were indiscreet and redundant. Inscribed within the text by a "hand" she could manipulate at will, the author could be read off the page, and it fell to the reader to compose the image of the author from the data gleaned during the reading. (2004: 41)

In musical terms: the concept of implied author suggests that the listener can compose the composer him/herself through listening to the music. As a result, the focus is not actually on the music, but rather on the construction of the image of the composer by the listener. In fact, Bal continues, the concept of implied author

> […] *authorized* the interpretation one wished to put forward without taking responsibility for it. The phenomenological edge of he concept wore off. What was left was the authority of the constative statements that speaking of – but simultaneously *for* – the implied author afforded. Judgements based on the idiosyncrasies of individual readings could be presented with the aura of having detected what the author, willy-nilly, "meant to say." Meaning thus collapsed into intention. (41, emphasis in original)

In the end, the analyst can hide behind the concept of implied author, because it makes the implicit claim that the analyst is speaking on behalf of the author.

Bal warns that even the whole concept of narrator is problematic in the sense that it can be used to sanction a particular interpretation of a narrative:

> [T]he presence of authority in humanistic studies allows the authorization of the interpretation to be naturalized. The concept of narrator is part of that

> authorizing impulse. As a phantom presence, the author continues to lurk in the wings as long as the major analytical concepts partake of the author's anthropomorphic shape. The attribution of intention that this concept of narrator facilitates is a weapon in subordinating the reader. (44)

Through the concept of narrator the author might be reintroduced into the interpretation, which in turn might lead to the reintroduction of the implied author and the problems related to this concept that I just discussed.

In an effort to eliminate authorship as the prime preoccupation of literary study the term "voice" is introduced. Yet, Bal observes, with this term authorship is let in again "[…] through the back door" (40). Voice, she claims,

> […] insists too exclusively on illocution, that aspect of speech – and by extension, of all cultural utterances – that indicates the speaker's intent. In the process it privileges the speaker, writer, or maker of images. Thus, the concept lends itself to subordinating and easily obscuring perlocution, the utterance's *effect*, and thereby disempowers the listener, reader, or viewer. (45, emphasis in original)

Voice implies a focus on intention instead of on the effect of that which is expressed, and thus neglects the interaction between expression and observer. Furthermore, the concept of voice, as well as the concept of narrator, tends to restrict narrative analysis to the inscription of time as foundation of narrativity, Bal asserts (46).

As an alternative to the concept of voice, Bal suggests to put this concept "under erasure," which means that it remains functional, while it is questioned and made liable to produce its own alternative (51). Instead, Bal proposes to focus on the concept of path. In this way, she contends, the anthropomorphic question "who?" is changed into a spatial question "where?" Path, Bal explains,

> […] proposes a semantic construction whose building blocks are *accumulative* meanings. The spatial metaphor indicates that the reader strolls in the text, travels through it, but at each stretch she continues with more baggage. According to this metaphor, the linearity of reading is complicated by a progressive but unsystematic growth of "layers" of meaning. The architectural metaphor matters here. What results is a building, solid to the extent that it cannot be excised from the culture in which it was constructed; imaginary to the extent that its construction corresponds only partially to the architect's design, or score. (47, emphasis in original)

The metaphor of the path, Bal concludes, has the advantage that it "[…] de-naturalizes the individual genius 'behind' the work of art as the source, origin, and authority of its meanings and effects" (51).

The concept of path, as elaborated by Bal, is very similar to the UNLL-process that I described in chapter 1. Just as the reader in Bal's account of path, the listener acquires more information about the music s/he is listening to during the UNLL-process. Older musical events influence newer events, while new events can shed new light on older ones. Thus, in the UNLL-process the listener travels back and forth, too. A listener can follow a certain path, for instance by interpreting a series of musical events as belonging together and forming a larger phrase. This path may prove to be an unfruitful one, in the sense that not all events can be grouped into a larger phrase. The listener then can "unlearn" this path, go back and take an alternative path that might be more successful in integrating into larger wholes the musical events that s/he identifies. The resulting musical structure is constructed within a particular culture; musical conventions, for instance, to a large extent determines the listener's expectations, and thus his/her choice of path. As a result, this structure cannot be removed from the culture in which it was created. Moreover, repeated listening may lead to different constructions that do not necessarily exclude each other; there is no one "correct" path which has to be found and followed. Focusing on other musical elements results in following different, equally valid paths.

Yet, the UNLL-process, as well as the following of musical paths, does not belong to narrative music exclusively. They are part of what Kunst calls musical understanding in general. Hence, the notion of path cannot really act as an alternative to the function of narrator, at least not in musical narrative. The notion of path is not a notion that is specific to narrativity. Therefore, I prefer not to do away with the function of musical narrator, while trying not to anthropomorphize this function or to use it to authorize my analyses. Moreover, a musical narrator does not always have to be external and imperceptible, as I will show in the analysis below. Consequently, it remains useful to specify which kind of narrator can be posited in a particular musical work.

Geistreiche Erzähler

The execution of a piece of music is a temporal process. The process of execution of this music is eliminated when a listener is no longer aware of the fact that the music is being produced. This is perhaps difficult to forget when a listener is at the same time a viewer when attending a live performance of the piece. In that case, the listener sees performers act in order to produce the sounds s/he perceives as music. So, forgetting the fact that music is executed is perhaps easier when listening to music via media other than live performances. But this is not the main issue here. What I intend to focus on in the following

analysis is whether or not the sounds the listener hears and identifies as musical signs that constitute a musical piece themselves conceal or eliminate the process of execution.

The process of execution of a composition is something that can clearly be heard in Helmut Lachenmann's Second String Quartet (1989), "Reigen seliger Geister" ("Dance of the Blessed Spirits"). In this quartet, the members often produce unconventional musical sounds; many of the sounds that can be heard consist of unpitched noises. These noises, however, are produced during the performance, by executing meticulously described/prescribed techniques. The listener can actually hear these techniques being prepared and applied while listening to the piece. The fact that the music allows all this to be heard means that the music does not try to conceal the process of execution. On the contrary: as I will try to show below, the central issue of "Reigen seliger Geister" is musical performance, or musical execution, itself.

The piece begins with a pianississimo F sharp, played by the viola "mit Spannschraube," i.e. the string is hit with the tension adjuster of the bow. This note is about the most conventional sound that is played in the first part of the piece, and it acts as a kind of remembrance of a tradition that has been parted from in this piece. The tone is followed by a series of unpitched sounds, produced by bowing dampened strings and other parts of the instruments. The "breathing" effect that results from this manner of playing does not bring to mind conventional music at all. At the same time, however, the actions the members of the quartet have to perform in order to achieve the desired sounds can be clearly distinguished. The placement and removal of the bow, the stroking of the instruments, the hitting of the strings and other parts of the instruments, the (almost) unpitched plucks, are all clearly audible, without them being concealed by a melody or harmony that draws the attention of the listener away from the process of execution, i.e. the physical labor that is necessary in order to produce music (ex. 2.1).[5]

At 0'21" (as performed by the Arditti String Quartet in the recording released by Montaigne MO 782130; bars 6-8 in the score), the first violin hints at something that is reminiscent of a melody, but because it is played *sul ponticello*, the tones remain faint and distant (ex. 2.2). The second violin does the same at 1'18" (bars 20-22), but because here the other voices play less than at 0'21" (bars 6-8), the reminiscence of a melody is a bit stronger. Next, the second violin gets

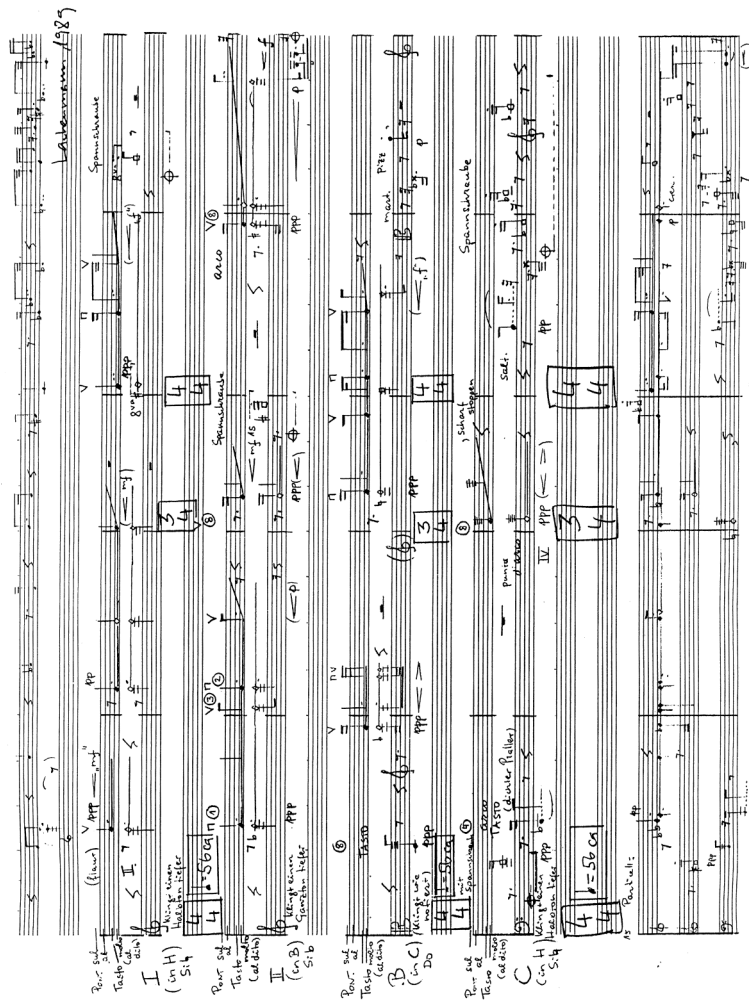
[5] Contrary to conventional notation, every instrument's part is notated using two, instead of one, staves. On the bottom staff, the actions the left hand has to perform are notated, whereas on the upper staff the same is done for the right hand. Furthermore, since the parts are notated at transposed pitch, a reduction at sounding pitch is written below the individual parts. Above the individual parts, lastly, an indication of the overall rhythmical structure is given.

to play a high-pitched note, a c'''. The way this note is played, and the fact that it is played after the "semi-melody," gives it a pastiche-like quality, an iconic reference to the virtuoso performance practice, here reduced to a virtual performance (ex. 2.3).

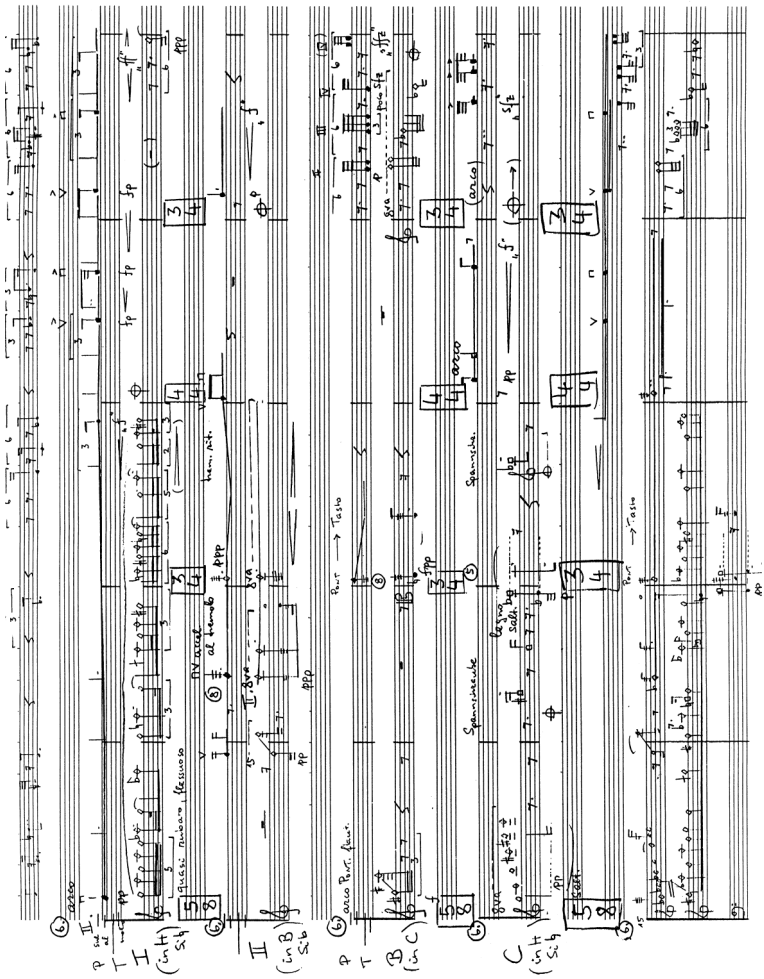
Another reference to the virtuoso performance practice can be found between 5'30" and 6'34" (bars 85-112). Here all instruments play an alternation of chromatic and triadic arpeggios, alluding to a Paganini piece, both synchronous and asynchronous, audible and barely audible, suddenly ending in a unpitched breathing sound.

Similar phrases can be found between 9'55" and 10'05" (bars 161-164) and between 10'18" and 10'22" (bars 165-167). After this, more and more pitched tones enter the music, and although these still have an unusual timbre due to the way these notes are played, they at least have a definite pitch.

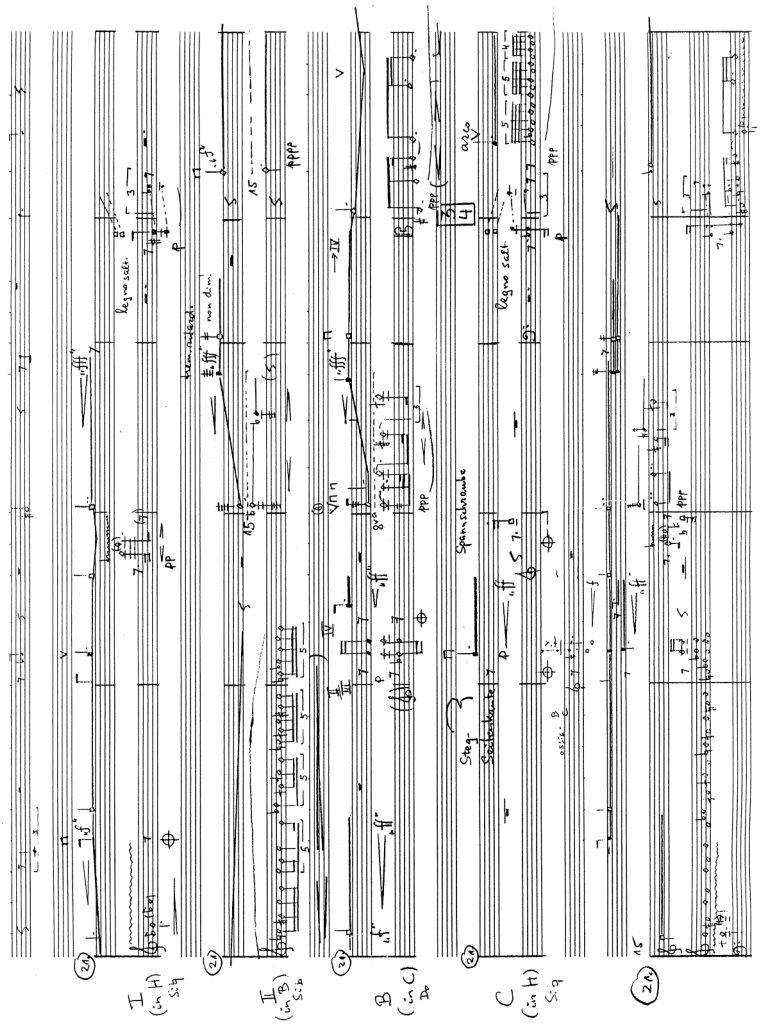
At 18'01" (bar 278), however, again a different radical break with tradition takes place. Here the first and second violins are to be played like a guitar: on the lap of the performers and with a plectrum. At 18'24" (bar 281), the viola and the cello do the same. Not before 23'43" – 24'09" (bars 354, 356, 358 and 360) the second violin, the cello, the viola and the first violin, respectively, are to be played again in a conventional manner. Still, any hope that the music will sound more conventional from that point on was already shattered between 20'38" and 21'01" (bars 315, 321 and 323). There, the first and second violin, the viola and the cello had to be tuned down with one turn of every tuning peg, in such a manner that the strings were no longer tuned in fifths. As a result, the players no longer can control the pitch of the notes they play. The piece therefore ends, paradoxically, with determined unpitched noises and randomly pitched notes.



Example 2.1. Helmut Lachenmann, Second String Quartet, bars 1-5.



Example 2.2. Helmut Lachenmann, Second String Quartet, bars 6-10.



Example 2.3. Helmut Lachenmann, Second String Quartet, bars 21-25.

In this composition, the execution of the sounds within the piece is not concealed by a melody or harmony that draws the attention of the listener away from the process of execution. It is rather that the sounds that are made often conceal the melodies that exist in this piece. In addition, there are moments in which the pitched notes are played at a barely audible level, and one has to listen very carefully to be able to

hear these through the unpitched sounds that are present as well. In these instances, the listener is always aware of the physical aspect of musical performance, since the sounds s/he hears do not remind him/her of music, but of the acoustic component of physical events. Defined in a semiotic fashion, these sounds can be regarded as indices that point to physical events. In order to produce these events, the performers have to follow precisely formulated techniques and the performers really have to stretch and play at the height of their powers in order to be able to execute this piece properly.[6] They have to be top musicians.

But, as soon as they are indeed being top musicians and give an excellent performance of this piece, they are not only producing music in a classical, traditional sense, but also acoustic components of physical events. Every now and then a hint or allusion of a melodic fragment can be heard, and sometimes even for a relatively long period. Furthermore, these fragments occasionally are louder than the surrounding sounds, and preceded by a crescendo, as if the fragments "escape" from the noise. These melodic fragments are perceived as remarkable moments in the piece. Thus, instead of regarding the pitched tones as unmarked terms, these are considered marked terms, moments that stand out in the music.[7] As soon as a musician is doing his/her best as a musician and gives a proper performance of "Reigen seliger Geister," s/he is in the process of redefining his/her identity as a musician. S/he is properly executing the prescribed sounds that are, however, not associated with classical, more traditional musical sounds. As a result, s/he is acting in a way that is apparently not audibly compatible with classical, traditional musical acting. Thus, in this piece the musicians redefine their qualities as musicians by showing those very same qualities.

In addition to questioning musicality, the notion of narrativity itself is problematized as well. Initially, it is not at all clear whether or not the sounds the listener is hearing belong to each other, whether or not they are part of a process that is unfolding. It is not until later in the piece that the listener might realize that the sounds are connected, but not in the way traditional musical sounds are, that is, not through harmonic tension. Rather, it is the tension between conventional and unconventional musical sounds that creates a sense of unity in this composition. As a result, it is the interplay between musical and unmusical sounds that constitute the representation of a temporal development in this piece.

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[6] Along with the musical score, a nine-page booklet is supplied in which all the different playing techniques are explained.

[7] In chapter 3, I will elaborate the concept of markedness.

Moreover, I contend that, in this composition, narrativity is challenged in other ways as well. In this piece, no effort is made to conceal or eliminate the physical labor that is necessary to produce the sounds that constitute the piece. On the contrary: on many occasions one can clearly distinguish the actions, which the members of the quartet have to perform in order to achieve the desired sounds. These sounds together do not constitute a larger whole – melodies or chords – in the way a sequence of conventional tones with a defined pitch would, but remain a succession of sounds, each referring to nothing else than their own origin, their own execution. Melodies and chords usually conceal the process of musical execution, since the listener's attention is drawn to the larger wholes the individual sounds contribute to. In more traditional tonal music, the listener mainly focuses on the resulting melodies and chords, rather than on the execution of individual sounds.

In discussing narrativity in nonfigurative paintings, Bal also focuses on the process of execution. In her discussion, she distinguishes between "imperceptible" third-person and "audible" first-person modes of representing objects in paintings:

> In painting, the abstract expressionism of artists like Pollock and de Kooning, by virtue of the emphatic inscription of the hand of the artist, comes close to being "first-person" narrative. This tells the story of its making, and the various layers or splashes of paint "tell" about the temporally distinct phases of that making. In contrast, images that eliminate references to the painting process present their objects, or contents, in a "third-person" mode. (1999: 177)

Bal speaks about a painting that "tells the story of its making." The noun "making" here does not refer to the process of invention, but to the process of execution. That is why this story has a distinctly temporal aspect. A painting that "tells the story of its making" can be considered as a first-person narrative, because it tells something about itself. The narrator itself acts as a character in the story it is telling, which is the story of its own coming into being. This means that the narrator of that painting can be considered as being character bound, too.

Because of the constant self-reference of the sounds in "Reigen seliger Geister," I contend that these sounds are telling the story of their own making as well. Therefore, in every occurrence of the unconventional sounds I described above, a character-bound narrator is posited that tells a story about itself, the story of its execution. It is a first-person narrative, since it is telling a story in which the narrator is itself at the same time the (sole) character; it tells about the process of its own coming into being. This first-person narrative, however, is not

the only narrative that is told. It rather is an embedded text with its own embedded narrator. As I have explained, the piece also can be regarded as telling the story about redefinition of musicality. Unpitched noises shout down traditional classical musical sounds, such as melodies and harmony. The character-bound narrator articulates a contemporary musicality while telling the story of its making, a story that is embedded in the story about the redefinition of musicality. This suggests that another narrator is posited in the piece. This narrator is not perceptible, so it cannot be a character-bound narrator, but only an external narrator. Ultimately, it is this imperceptible external narrator that relates the story in music.

Musical Story

Until now, I have spoken about story as if it were entirely clear what the meaning of that term is. In everyday language use, the term might be used conveniently without articulating exactly what we mean by that term. In narratology, however, the term "story" has a specific definition and thus has to be regarded accordingly. As I remarked above, Bal defines a story as a fabula that is presented in a certain manner, a fabula being a series of logically and chronologically related events that are caused or experienced by actors. According to Bal, there are different aspects that distinguish the structured story from the fabula, i.e. those elements of a story that can be different from the fabula (1997: 78). She mentions six aspects: sequential ordering, rhythm, frequency, character, space, and focalization.

By presenting a certain sequential ordering of events in a story, anachrony, a deviation from the chronological order as presented in the fabula, can be created. Changing the rhythm of events in a story can do the same. With frequency, the numerical relationship between the events in the fabula and those in the story can be manipulated. With character, the actors that act in a fabula become "personalized," while the events of the fabula can be placed in a space. By focalization, lastly, Bal understands the relations between the elements presented and the vision through which they are presented, i.e. the relation between perception, which is not only visual, and that, which is perceived.

The aspect of character in music is in some ways a problematic notion. Discussion of musical character may lead, misleadingly, to an anthropomorphic view of this aspect. Bal herself defines character as "[…] the actor provided with distinctive characteristics which together create the effect of a character" (114), to which she adds that she employs the term "character" for "[…] the anthropomorphic figures the narrator tells us about" (114). As character, actors become real "personalities," humanized figures readers can relate to. However,

musical actors do not necessarily have to be regarded as functions that can, or must, be personalized, as I will argue below. The question whether or not a musical actor is a basic element that has to be dressed up with the aid of the aspect of character, can only be answered after it is clear how a musical actor is defined. I therefore postpone the discussion of musical character until I have given a proper definition of the musical actor.

The first three aspects, i.e. sequential ordering, rhythm, and frequency, on the other hand, can be explained here. Imberty remarks that

> […] the macrostructure [of a musical piece] is first of all a schema of the structuring of time, an a priori ordering of sonorous events in time, according to rules stemming from perceptuo-cognitive mechanisms which allow the detection of changes and salient elements in the sonorous flux. In sum, the macrostructure of a musical piece is made up of the perception and retention in memory of some particularly significant changes, which determine the overall progression of the piece for the listener. (1993: 333)

Music, Imberty argues, is a structure, an ordering of events in time, an ordering in a sequential fashion, which can be recognized by the listening subject. This subject recognizes in the sounds s/he is hearing the musical events and the sequential ordering of these events, which constitutes the structure of the music. And, according to Newcomb, it is this sequence of musical events that becomes a coherent story "[…] to the extent that we interpret its events according to sets of relatively conventional narrative paradigms" (1987: 166). The events are recognized with the aid of musical conventions and other mechanisms, which, as I will explain below, reside in the memory of the listener, and Newcomb contends that these events are themselves interpreted through "sets of relatively conventional narrative paradigms." Newcomb here maintains that the existence of some sort of narrative convention enables the listener to interpret a series of events as forming a story. He does not explain, however, what these conventions (or conventional narrative paradigms, as he calls them) exactly are, but in arguing that such conventions exist and that a listener uses them while interpreting music, he seems to imply that a listener always interprets music in a narrative manner. He presupposes that a listener always intentionally wants to hear a story in the music. Why else should s/he apply "conventional narrative paradigms" while interpreting musical events? But to presuppose this is might be too strong a contention, and I suggest to change the phrase "sets of narrative paradigms" into "organizing principles," which presupposes a much less strong a priori intention in the listener to try to grasp the music. This grasp might be accomplished by taking a narrative

listening stance, as I proposed in the previous chapter, but this does not mean that a listener always listens to music while taking such a stance.

Nevertheless, this does not change the fact that, in the study of musical narrativity, one has to pay special attention to the sequential orderings of events, as Francesco Giomi and Marco Ligabue argue:

> The study of narrative processes is based upon an interpretation of the different analytical levels through which we can assign to musical elements – as formal units, structural sections, syntagmatic chains [sequential combination of sound events which have unity, autonomy and a sense of coherence] even as single events – specific functions of signification. (1998: 45)

Giomi and Ligabue also stress the importance of studying the way events are formed and subsequently organized into larger units, i.e. sequences. They also argue that to all events and higher-order structures some sort of signification can be assigned, as a result of them being on a certain level of the narrative process. An event or sequence thus becomes meaningful as a result of its relation to the other events and sequences, because it has a specific position within the musical structure.[8]

But, as Pasler remarks, paying attention to sequential orderings alone is not sufficient to give an adequate account of musical narrativity. In restricting our analysis to regarding these orderings as static entities, we overlook a crucial aspect of music: the fact that music is a temporal art. Narrative aspects like rhythm and frequency are typically noticed while listening to music. Of course, one can notice these temporal aspects, too, when studying the score – which, as I argued in the previous chapter, can have many drawbacks, but in this way the most important and illusive character of music, to use Pasler's expression, is ignored:

> The ultimate reason narrative events are directed and connected is that they undergo or cause transformation, which is probably the narrative's most important and most illusive characteristic […] [A] musical narrative must also start with something which is incomplete and enticing so that the listener is interested in its future possibilities […] Most analyses of narrative largely ignore this aspect of narrative because they emphasize structural relationships rather than their transformation in time, and static rather than dynamic relationships between the parts of a narrative. (1989: 241)

So, according to Pasler, sequences have to be regarded as dynamic entities: they start somewhere and head for a certain goal, and during their course the listener will have some expectations regarding the

[8] This aspect of musical narrativity is elaborated in the next chapter.

direction the sequence will take, while the sequence itself will either comply with this expectancy or not. It is this dynamic quality of music that is of prime importance in studying musical narrativity.[9]

Karl also uses the notion of sequence in his analysis of musical narrativity in Ludwig van Beethoven's piano sonata in F Minor, op. 57/i (1804), in which the ideas of expectancy and fulfillment play a central role. He distinguishes ten kinds of so-called functional sequences, i.e. actions that are the fundamental units of plots (1997: 20-22). First, he mentions "enclosure," which is a

> […] sequence in which an agent is, within a closed unit of structure, directly preceded and followed by material playing an opposing role or representing a contrasting state; enclosures are often like verbal exchanges between two parties in which the first to speak also has the final word, refuting or sweeping aside an objection interposed by an adversary. (20)

This is a very structuralist account of the term "enclosure," since Karl puts oppositions as central. The next functional sequence he defines is "disruption"; "[…] a pattern resembling a failed enclosure in which the element to be enclosed proves uncontainable" (20). "Subversion" is "[…] the undercutting of the character or expressive qualities of one agent due to the influence, superimposition, or ascendancy of an agent in an opposing role" (22), whereas "counteraction" is "[…] a measure taken to counter the effects of a prior enclosure, disruption, or subversion" (22). "Realization" is "[…] the bringing about of a desired state or the fulfillment of a threat" (22) and "withdrawal" "[…] an introversive counteraction – a retreat from conflict" (22). The final four functional sequences Karl mentions without giving any additional explanation: "interruption," "integration," "divergence," and "transfiguration."

Whereas Bal considers specific sequences to be deviations of the fabula, Karl argues that these sequences are constitutive of the plot.[10] While he is taking a Russian formalist stance by focusing on the notion of function as the central element of a plot, and he himself acknowledges that he is doing so (19), he goes one step further and introduces functional sequences into the plot, instead of sticking to the notion of function. He is forced, however, to divert from the pure notion of function, since it is difficult, if not impossible, to identify these kinds of functions in music. For how can the listener recognize in this medium "[…] an act of dramatic personae, which is defined from

[9] The notions of temporality and expectancy play a central role throughout this study, since the notion of expectancy is problematized in many contemporary musical compositions, as I have explained in chapter 1. In chapters 3 and 4, musical temporality and its relation to narrativity are discussed extensively.

[10] Plot and fabula are considered to be more or less equivalent in Karl's article.

the point of view of its significance for the course of action of the tale as a whole," which is the definition Vladimir Propp gives of a function (Propp, as quoted in Culler 1975: 208)? In other words, Karl is forced to alter the concept of function, but in so doing he crosses the border between story and fabula, which he also does by incorporating "character" explicitly into his notion of plot, since this aspect belongs to the story level rather than to the level of the fabula.[11]

Treating a musical plot as he does, Karl cannot really discuss the way musical compositions play with standard musical forms, as has been done since the beginning of the nineteenth century onwards:

> The problematization of Classical form at the hands of late Beethoven, Schumann, Liszt, Wagner, Mahler, and the like marks one of the deepest differences between eighteenth- and nineteenth-century music. This problematization is in turn one of the principal causes of the increasingly important narrative aspect in nineteenth-century instrumental music. It forces the listener to engage in the fundamental narrative activity that Ricoeur calls "following a story," matching successions of musical events against known configurations, in order both to forge an understanding of what one has heard and to make predictions of possible continuations. (Newcomb 1987: 174)

According to Newcomb, paraphrasing Paul Ricoeur, narrative activity starts when a musical piece enters into discussion with a standard form. Tarasti formulates this in more general terms: "Narrative structures can emerge particularly when, as a stylistic device, syntactical structures are deliberately broken" (1994: 31). Only when certain deviations occur, and the listener has to find out what has happened for which reason, and s/he tries to make predictions regarding the course of the music, s/he is really engaged in a narrative activity. So, despite the fact that Newcomb refers to the composer and the way s/he manipulates standard forms, he acknowledges that the narrative starts with the listener rather than the maker. Now, when we consider the fabula as such a standard form, then we are able, by analyzing the story level of a musical piece, to point out in what way this piece comments on this form. But in Karl's analysis, this deviation is already built in his conception of plot, so he cannot show us how Beethoven plays with musical forms, i.e. the underlying plot or fabula.

The question is, however, whether or not we really want to show this, since our focus here is on the way the listener can hear a narrative in music, rather than explaining how a composer treats musical conventions. Consequently, the following question Newcomb poses is less relevant in this context:

[11] I will discuss Karl's conception of character below.

> [I]n instrumental music one can see musical events as tracing, or implying at any given moment, a paradigmatic plot – in the sense of a conventional succession of functional events. The question then becomes: how does the composer handle this narrative; what is the nature of the interaction between paradigmatic plot and succession of events in the individual movement or piece? (1987: 167)

At this point, Newcomb does return to the maker. He no longer focuses on the listener, but instead concentrates on the composer and his/her relation to the musical narrative. In this study, however, this relation does not play an important role, for music, as perceived by the listener, is the object this study is about. So, the relevant issue here is how the problematization of established conventional forms by a musical piece affects narrativity as perceived by the listener, an issue to which I will return in the next chapter. But in this case, too, Karl is unable to show us, in a proper narratological manner, the mechanisms behind this affection.

Spacing Music

Bal explains that the events of the fabula can be placed in a space (1997: 135-136). She argues that space can function as a frame, a place of action. Space, however, can also be "thematized," which means that it becomes an object of presentation itself, "[…] for its own sake" (136). It then plays an important role in the narrative, and can even function as the central theme.

Tarasti has a conception of musical space, which is derived from Algirdas Julien Greimas's semiotic theory:[12]

> In a musical space, or "being," the "will" (kinetic energy and goal-directedness) appears in such a way that some point of the musical space is the object of a particular striving; for example, tonic in the inner space [the centripetal/centrifugal tendencies within a musical text, e.g. key relations in Western tonal music], a certain register in the outer [the different registers in music]. (1994: 87)

Tarasti regards musical space as a collection of oppositions. An example of such a collection is the one Tarasti mentions here, that of "will." In this case, "will be" is opposed to "not-will be" and "not-will not-be" to "will not-be." These oppositions constitute a space, in which musical objects are placed. This object becomes meaningful by standing in a certain relation to the oppositions. The note G, for instance, "wants" to go to the note C, when it is sounding in a musical piece that is written in C major. Thus, in such a piece, G "will be" C,

[12] In Meelberg (2003), I investigate whether or not Greimas's semiotic theory and its application to music are compatible.

whereas G "not-will be" B flat. In other words, Tarasti's musical space is an elaboration of the notions of musical causation and expectation I discussed above.

Tarasti's conception of musical space is an interesting notion, but not compatible with Bal's conception of space. Bal's space is a "place of action," whereas Tarasti's space is a "cause of action." Tarasti regards musical space to be those mechanisms that lie behind the phenomenon Snyder calls musical causation. This notion of musical space seems to be equivalent to Bal's notion of actor, i.e. a function that causes or experiences events, rather than to Bal's notion of space.

In his study into computer aided composition, Eduardo Reck Miranda formulates two fundamental notions about music, viz. musical compositions carry abstract structures and music is sounds organized in space and time (2001: 1). To this he adds that

> […] space is primarily associated with vertical (or simultaneous) relationships between sounds, whereas time is associated with horizontal (or sequential) relationships. The notion of space in terms of the geographical distribution of sounds in the performance area is an exciting new dynamic. Contemporary composers are increasingly exploring "real" (that is, geographical) space in their pieces by either distributing performers at different locations in a room and/or using sophisticated sound diffusion systems. (1)

At first sight, Miranda's remark that space can be regarded as the simultaneous relationships between sounds seems to be an adequate musical equivalent of narratological space. This relationship codetermines the interpretation of sounds and musical events; individual sounds are interpreted differently when occurring simultaneously with different other sounds. To give a simple example: a note E is interpreted differently when sounding together with an A major chord than when sounding together with a C minor chord. In this way, the simultaneous organization of sounds creates a frame, a specific context, and thus seems to comply with Bal's definition of narratological space. Her definition, however, states that events can be placed in such a context. But the simultaneous organization of sounds is itself composed by a musical event, rather than constituting something external in which events can be placed, as the example I just gave shows.

Furthermore, when more events are sounding at the same time, simultaneous relationships between events can be heard, and thus constitute a frame, too. In this case, events are indeed placed in a context, but this context is generated by the events themselves. The interpretation of an event here is dependent on the other events that are sounding at the same time, just as the interpretation of a note depends

on the other notes that are sounding simultaneously. Thus, since space is a context in which events can be interpreted, in music the simultaneous ordering of sounds and/or events themselves would constitute this context. As a result, in this conception musical space would not be a separate element in which events can be placed, but rather a phenomenon that occurs within, or between, musical events. Moreover, in this conception the specificity of narratological space is minimized, since it is now equated with context. But, because not every context is spatial, this conception of space is not specific enough.

More useful is Miranda's comment that contemporary composers make explicit use of geographical space. Yet, these composers do not only distribute the performers spatially. The musical sounds and musical events themselves are often distributed in physical space as well, especially when it concerns electronic or electro-acoustic music. In these compositions, the explicit demonstration and/or manipulation of the placement of musical events in the stereo or surround image is an important spatial musical characteristic. It is this characteristic that I would call musical narrative space, i.e. the aspect in which the events of the fabula can be placed. In chapter 6 I will give two examples of electro-acoustic works that articulate musical space.

As a consequence, musical space is a rather marginal category, since mainly particular contemporary musical works make the placement of musical events explicit.[13] This means that space only plays a part in those specific pieces. In contrast, space can nearly always be recognized in verbal narrative. Thus, whereas in verbal narrative space is a common category, in music it remains exceptional. Therefore, it is all the more important to specify the function of musical space when it occurs in a musical work.

Performance as Focalization

Focalization is the relation between the elements presented and the vision through which they are presented. In other words, it is the relation between perception and that which is perceived, with "perception" being more than just vision. Theoretically, there has to be a distinction between those who see and those who speak, i.e. the vision through which the elements are presented and the identity of the voice that is verbalizing that vision (Bal 1997: 142-143). Hence, we have to make a clear distinction between the function of narrator and of focalizor, which is the subject of focalization, the point from which the elements are perceived. This function can lie with a character, or it can

[13] Renaissance composer Adrian Willaert's works for Venetian double choruses are examples of older music that exploits geographical space. In these works two choruses are positioned at a distance from each other, and sing in an antiphonic manner, i.e. one chorus responds to the other and vice versa.

be external (146). When analyzing narratives, several relevant questions concerning focalization can be asked, such as: What is the object of focalization? With what attitude does the focalizor view things? Who focalizes? Focalization is regarded as an important aspect of a story, since it is this aspect that defines the way the story is communicated to us. The narrator may be a function that in fact utters the linguistic signs that constitute the text, but it is through focalization that the specificity or limitedness of the image that the reader receives is determined. Bear in mind that "image" is being used metaphorically here, since focalization is not strictly visual.[14]

Focalization is such an important aspect because it "colors" the story with subjectivity, to use Bal's expression. The jazz composer and musician Carla Bley also uses color as a metaphor when describing her compositions: "I write pieces that are like drawings in a crayon book and the musicians color them themselves" (quoted in Benson 2003: 135). Benson adds that this coloring never stays purely within the lines. "For the 'coloring in' that takes place in performance also consists of redefining those lines or, alternatively, redefining what it means to respect them" (135). The interpretation of a written score, which is the crayon book that is colored in during performance, is translated into sounds by that performance.

Hence, the composer is not the only person who is necessary for the creation of music. Music, the way it is regarded in this study, is only music when the music is actually sounding, thus when it is performed. As Benson observes, the way music is traditionally preserved is via a musical score, via a notated script. With the aid of this script the performer or performers can give a rendition of the musical piece the composer has conceived. This rendition complies however only partially, at best, with the intentions of the composer. Since a written score leaves so many options open, they do "[…] make a work ideal – in the sense of being available to all – [but] they likewise allow a work to be detached from its composer and open to a wide variety of interpretations" (79). A score is a way to ensure the continuing existence of a musical work, while this manner of preservation is at the same time a guarantee for there being a wide variety of differently sounding performances of that work. As soon as the writing is done, the composer him/herself can no longer control the way the music will ultimately sound in performance, other than trying to be present during rehearsals and hoping the directions s/he gives will be acted upon

[14] Focalization does not determine the completeness of the image, since this would imply that, in theory, there could be a complete account. This would mean that there could exist some sort of zero-focalization, i.e. a relation in which no focalization is present, in the case of a complete account. Bal, however, contends that every narration has some sort of focalization, and thereby argues against Genette (1972), who does claim that narration with zero-focalization can exist.

during the performance of the piece.[15] A musical text, then, which I earlier defined as a finite, structured whole composed of musical signs, does not receive its final appearance when the musical score is written by the composer, but only during performance; the moment in which, to use Benson's expression, the musical work is "embodied" (82).

Paraphrasing Wilhelm von Humboldt, Benson argues that the work, the *ergon*, exists as an activity, as *energeia* (125), and thus emphasizes the necessity of one or more performers in order to let a musical text exist. According to Benson, regarding *ergon* as *energeia* has several implications: first, the creation of a musical work, in the sense of writing a score, is not an end in itself, but a means to the end of making music. Likewise, the performance cannot be seen apart from the work. All this, finally, makes the idea of authorship much more complex (126). Because the performer has such a decisive part in both the existence and the contents of a musical work, Benson argues that the composer cannot be the sole author of a sounding musical piece. S/he might have written the musical score, but s/he only did that in order to create sounding music, and for that s/he needs performers. These performers themselves are at the same time co-authors, since the score from which they are playing off leaves many options open, which they can fill in as they like. The filling in of these options is a very important activity, for, as Benson argues, "[…] it is precisely what is not to be found in the score that we often most value" (84-85). The reason why a listener favors one performance of a musical work over another work cannot be found in the notes themselves. The lines in the crayon book, the musical score, stay the same, but it is the coloring within and over these lines that shape the listener's preferences. The performance thus determines how the music is communicated to the listener: performance acts as musical focalization, the point from which the musical events are perceived.[16]

A literary focalizor always gives a limited and specific account of events. Through focalization it is determined how limited or specific the image is that the reader receives. When performing a musical work, the "image" of the musical events that is given to the listener is also always limited and specific: the performer or performers have to make choices about the interpretation of the piece, by deciding for instance whether or not the rendition will be historically "authentic," how to

[15] Yet, even when the composer him/herself conducts his/her own music, total control over the music is impossible. Benson for instance refers to the many recordings in which Igor Stravinsky has conducted his *Le Sacre du Printemps* (1913), with each of the recordings being very different from the other ones (2003: 79). Of course, it cannot be ruled out that these differences could also have occurred because the views of the composer have changed between two subsequent recording dates.

[16] In the case of a recording, the musical focalizor is augmented with the technology and production that was necessary in creating the recording.

interpret dynamic and tempo marks, which are by definition only approximate, etc. In other words: the focalization in a musical work always results in a limited account of the musical story.[17]

Still, it is not at all clear what it means to give a "true" account of musical events. It is not the transparent presentation of a musical score, if only because this would imply that improvised music would not be focalized. Yet, in the performance of improvised music, too, choices are made, options are rejected, and alternatives are selected. Consequently, in improvised music a limited and specific account of musical events is given as well. Moreover, the musical events in a score are not represented transparently, i.e. unfocalized. For the score of a musical narrative is itself a narrative text. And as a text, the score is itself focalized, which again results in a colored representation of events. Furthermore, the events in a score are necessarily of a different ontological category; they are turned from audible into visual signs. Therefore, unfocalized, and thus unperformed, musical events are necessarily abstract entities that can only be made concrete in a sounding text, which is always focalized.[18]

Focalization does not manifest itself in music in the same way as in literature. First of all, whereas in literature the focalization or focalizations are identical for every reading of the narrative, in music the focalization can, and almost always will, change in each performance. No one performance is the same, and therefore different interpretations, and thus different focalizations, of the same musical work may exist. A reader interprets the focalization(s) in a novel in his/her own way and that interpretation can change with every reading, whereas the presentation of this focalization stays the same. In music, however, both the focalization and the listener's interpretation can change with every performance. As a result, one cannot speak in musical narratology of different performances of the same musical narrative. Each performance of the same musical piece has to be regarded as a new musical narrative, a new work. Each of these

[17] Yet, the musical score is not the musical story. In fact, the score is itself a text that is different from a musical text, consisting of visual signs, relating a story, based on a fabula. This text, story, and fabula are related to the musical text, story, and fabula of the musical performance of the written piece, but are, by definition, not identical. For in my elaboration of musical text, story, and fabula I explicitly refer to sounds, rather than to visual signs. Consequently, musical scores are in no way compatible with a musical text, story, or fabula.

[18] As a result, it is impossible to have a sounding musical narrative that is not focalized, for performance, which is a necessary element in the production of sounding music, always implies focalization. Hence, one could regard a musical narrative as a making explicit of Bal's assertion that a narrative is always focalized. In order to create a musical narrative – that in my definition is always a sounding musical narrative, the music has to be performed, which necessarily implies focalization.

performances has a different focalization, and thus every performance of the same piece results in a different musical narrative.

Aleatoric music demonstrates this point in a very explicit manner. Two performances of the same aleatoric piece, say *Imaginary Landscape No. 4* (1951) for twelve radios, 24 performers and a conductor, composed by John Cage, cannot be identical. If this piece can be considered as narrative, then the resulting narratives are very different. It is also possible that one performance of this piece can be regarded as narrative, whereas another performance cannot. The performance is such a radical determining factor in the experience of the piece, that it even can control the degree of narrativity of the work in question.

Again, here I used a contemporary musical example, because it allows me to articulate my point in a precise manner. But in this case, too, my conclusion does not exclusively hold for contemporary music. Two performances of the same narrative tonal piece result in two different narratives as well. Probably not always as different as it would be in aleatoric music, but different nonetheless. One performance might be executed at a slower tempo, which might result in the identification of certain musical events that were unnoticeable in the faster performance of the same piece. One performance might be much more dynamic that another, to such an extent that dynamics becomes the most important parameter that determines the narrative character of a work, etc.

In literature, more that one focalizor, the subject through whose perception the reader perceives the events, can be found, while in music there is only one focalizor. After all, there is only one performance of a piece at a given time that can be heard. Although many musical pieces have to be performed by more than one musician, each musician contributes to the performance as a whole, and it is this performance through which focalization takes place. A performance is the end result of the creation of an interpretation of a musical work, a creation in which each performer shapes his/her interpretation of his/her individual part in order to achieve the desired end result. A rendition of a musical work by an ensemble of musicians is not the presentation of several focalizors, each giving his/her own view on the musical events at the same time, but the joint presentation of a single focalizor, i.e. the performance. Or, more precisely: the performance acts as an external focalizor, i.e. an anonymous agent situated outside the fabula (Bal 1997: 148), whereas the individual contributions of the musicians can be regarded as partial focalizations. These focalizations are embedded in the external focalization, which is the performance as a whole. This does not mean, though, that there is also only one focalization possible. A focalizor can "change its mind," as it were, and give a different "view" of the same situation. In a musical piece,

for instance, the same musical phrase can be repeated in different ways by the same focalizor. When this occurs, the function of external focalizor stays assigned to the same agent, i.e. the performance, and only the focalization, the way that phrase is performed, has changed.

Lastly, there is one more important difference between a literary and a musical focalizor. Since there is only one focalizor in a musical narrative, which is external, this suggests that there is no internal focalizor in music. And indeed, in this conception of musical focalization it is impossible to point out an internal focalizor in the music; music is solely focalized externally through the performance.

Electro-Acoustic Focalization

Anthèmes 2 (1997), composed by Pierre Boulez, is in two ways an innovative work. Firstly, it is an innovation with respect to an earlier piece by Boulez, *Anthèmes* (1991), a work for solo violin. Secondly, in *Anthèmes 2* live electronics are used in an innovative way. In this piece, written for violin and "disposif électronique," the sounds made by the violin are electronically altered and spatialized in real time, while other sounds are added that are electronically generated, and triggered by the violin's part.

In *Anthèmes 2*, it is the interplay between the violin and the electronic sounds that constitute focalization. Here we can really speak of a genuine interplay, since the electronic part is not fixed. This part is not just a playback of a tape or a sequencer, but on the contrary can vary from performance to performance, just like the live played violin part. The electronic sounds literally are a reaction to the violin part, and, as a result, these sounds vary as much from performance to performance as the violin part does.

The introduction of *Anthèmes 2*, "Libre," starts with the violin playing a descending line that is reverberated electronically. Next, the violin plays staccato bowed notes, to which echoes are added, that sound more pizzicato than arco. The violin concludes this first phrase with a short pizzicato note, and after that the introduction ends with a long, bowed, electronically altered note. In this introduction, the electronic sounds are embellishments rather than constituting a separate voice.

In the first movement, "Très lent, avec beaucoup de flexibilité – Libre," electronically harmonized melodic bowed phrases with electronically generated pizzicato-like embellishments are played. A long, electronically altered tone, similar to the one that can be heard at the end of the introduction, concludes the first movement. The second movement, "Rapide, dynamique, très rythmique, rigide – Libre," consists of a series of pizzicato notes, both played by the violin and generated electronically, as if engaged in some sort of dialogue. Often

it is not clear which notes are played by the violin and which are electronically generated. Later in this movement, at approximately 00'53" (as performed by Hae-Sun Kang, violin, in the recording released by Deutsche Grammophon 463 475-2), a clearer distinction is audible. At 01'37", the same long electronically altered tone that also appeared in the other movements is played, only this time it is repeated and varied. In these two movements, the electronic sounds break loose from the violin part, although they are still triggered by the violin. Only in the "libre" passages the electronic sounds appear to be more embellishments rather than constituting a separate part.

The next three movements give the same impression. Reminiscent of the pizzicato phrase in the second movement, the third movement, "Lent, régulier – Nerveux, irrégulier – Libre," starts off with fast staccato, bowed notes, again in dialogue with pizzicato-like electronically generated sounds. At 00'49", harmonized long notes, followed at 01'11" by a variation of the beginning of the movement, are played. The movement ends just like the first movement, with a long, electronically altered tone. The fourth movement, "Agité, instable – Libre," consists of bowed tremolo phrases in the violin, accompanied by reverberating sounds. Again, the movement ends with long note, this time repeated and varied. The fifth movement, "Très lent, avec beaucoup de flexibilité – Subitement nerveux et extrêmement irrégulier – Libre," also starts with a tremolo violin passage, this time electronically harmonized, followed by a similar phrase in the violin, but with pizzicato-like electronic accompaniment. The ending again is similar to the previous movement.

The sixth and final movement deviates form the structure of the previous ones. In the first part of this movement, "Allant, assez serré dans le tempo," a tremolo phrase played by the violin and electronic pizzicato-like sounds can be heard, interrupted by staccato echoes of arco tones. The second part, "Calme, régulier – Agité – Brusque," consists entirely of an alternation of fast notes of the violin played pizzicato and electronic tones, fast notes played arco plus electronic sounds, and soft arpeggios played pizzicato by the violin along with electronic reverberations. In the third and final part of the last movement, "Calme, sans traîner, d'un mouvement très régulier – Libre," a repeated bowed motif is played by the violin, which is varied slowly, accompanied by electronic reverberations and interrupted by other violin phrases. At the conclusion of the movement a long reverberation along with a very soft, sustained note in the violin can be heard. The piece ends with a short, soft tone, played pizzicato by the violin, without any electronic accompaniment.

Throughout the piece an alternation between electronic embellishments of the violin and the appearance of a genuine electronic voice alongside with the violin part appears. Both, however,

are generated by the performance of the violin part, and therefore the electronic part depends on the way this part is executed (which the listener can only be fully aware of when listening to several different performances of the piece). This is a reversal of the dependency relation in the performance of many electro-acoustic works, where the electronic part is fixed and the live performers have to adjust to this fixed part, for instance by playing along with a click track, since the electronic part cannot be changed during performance. But in *Anthèmes 2* it is the electronic part that has to adjust itself to the way the live part is executed.

This implies that the live performer determines, for the greater part, the focalization of *Anthèmes 2*. Here it is the human performer, and not the electronic device, that largely determines the manner in which the succession of musical events in this piece is communicated to the listener. S/he decides when a particular electronic sound or phrase will be audible, and even in part the way it will sound. This also implies that two performances of *Anthèmes 2* will differ in more ways than two performances of an electro-acoustic work with a fixed electronic part would. The focalization in these performances of *Anthèmes 2* will therefore differ considerably from each other.

In other words: the musical events that constitute *Anthèmes 2* can be told in different ways, as opposed to electronic works with fixed parts. Therefore, one could argue that these electronic works resemble a literary story more than a piece like *Anthèmes 2* does, since the focalization in these works stays the same for each performance, just as for each reading the focalization in a literary narrative is identical. Musical works in which the occurrence of electronic sounds depends on the live parts thus contain more aspects that are characteristic of "traditional" music. Perhaps this is also the reason why *Anthèmes 2* is such a fascinating piece: it is a modern electro-acoustic composition that is communicated to the listener via a classical musical focalization, i.e. the kind of focalization that can also be found in purely acoustic music.

Musical Fabula and Musical Events

Bal gives two different descriptions of fabula: a fabula is a series of logically and chronologically related events that are caused or experienced by actors, and a fabula is a memorial trace that remains with the reader after completion of the reading. These descriptions illustrate the two ways in which we can view the narrative trichotomy of text, story, and fabula. The second description of fabula complies with Bal's aim to formulate a theory that follows the order in which the reader gets access to and experiences a narrative text, in which the reconstruction of the fabula is the final stage. The first description of

fabula, on the other hand, seems to comply more with a bottom up approach to narrativity. One could argue that such a fabula can be reconstructed by the reader after the reading is done, which means that the memorial trace that remains with the reader in fact consists of a series of logically and chronologically related events that are caused or experienced by actors. In her discussion of fabula, however, Bal introduces notions like actor, location and time, which she considers to be basic elements that can be elaborated into a story. Although these elements can be extracted from a story, I would not go so far as to argue that, in the case of music, these elements in fact constitute the memorial trace that remains with the listener after the listening is done. Still, although this second characterization is more compatible with both musical cognition and with a top down approach to musical listening, I will now focus on the first one, since my aim here is to identify the narrative elements in a musical piece. A structuralist conception of fabula serves this aim better. Thus, in this section I regard a fabula a series of logically and chronologically related events that are caused or experienced by actors, whereby an event is regarded a transition from one state to another state, and an actor is an agent that performs actions, while "to act" is defined as causing or experiencing an event (Bal 1997: 5).

As I remarked above, Imberty regards the macrostructure of a musical piece as made up of the perception and retention in the listener's memory of some particularly significant changes, which determine the overall progression of the piece for this listener. These changes are constitutive of how the listener regards the music as divided into events. As I will argue below, however, events are not recognized in the music, but rather the representation of events, just as a verbal narrative is a representation of events rather than actually consisting of events. The listener thus recognizes the representations of individual events in a musical text s/he is listening to.

In his study into musical cognition, Snyder addresses the question how the listener's recognition of musical events and of the organization of these events is directed by the music itself. Snyder distinguishes three principles by which music can be divided into events, which he calls groupings: the principles of proximity, similarity, and continuity (2000: 39-43). The first principle states that sounds that are close together in time will tend to be grouped together. Snyder regards this principle as "[…] a primary grouping force at the melodic and rhythmic level" (40). He contends that "[…] of all the primitive grouping factors, temporal proximity appears to have the strongest effect and can often prevail over other grouping factors" (40). The time interval between events does not have to be large, since

> [i]n the ongoing flow of acoustical events, a slight difference in timing can form a temporal grouping boundary as well as a large difference can – it is the *change* in distance that is important. All other things being equal, an increase in time interval between the beginning of two events in a sequence will establish a grouping boundary. (40, emphasis in original)

With regard to the other principles by which music can be divided into events, Snyder remarks that the principle of similarity states that sounds perceived as being similar will tend to be grouped together (40). Concerning this principle, Snyder remarks that "[s]imilarity can create grouping in both vertical [simultaneous grouping] and horizontal [sequential grouping] dimensions of music" (41), so, similarity can create both harmonic and melodic events. The principle of continuity, finally, states that when a series of sounds consistently, or continuously, changes value in a particular direction in units of similar size, the sounds will tend to form events (43).

These principles emphasize the importance of time in music. Timing is constitutive for the possibility of structuring events in music. And since music primarily is a structuring of musical events, as Imberty argues, music without timing is near to impossible.[19] We have to bear in mind, however, that in a narrative reading music is a representation of a temporal development, while all music is itself a temporal phenomenon. As I remarked at the beginning of this chapter, a piece of music consists of sounds. Because of the succession of sounds the listener can get the impression the music is moving forward. It is this forward motion, and the expectations this impression of movement generates, and which are either met or not, that we call musical development. Yet, not all music can be considered to represent a musical development, and therefore not all music is narrative. All music, however, is temporal, and some of this music shows a development in consequence of the interplay of expectations, or tension, and resolution, and thus might also be narrative.

With regard to the forward motion that is suggested by musical events, Snyder remarks:

> [M]usical events are seen as "leading to," or "causing" successive events that are close to and similar to them. This is, of course, all metaphorical because musical events do not actually cause each other in the way that other kinds of physical events do (although they can *imply* each other). It is interesting to note that causation is also an important factor in the construction of linear verbal narrative; sequences of narrative events are also often linked by chains of causation. (113-114, emphasis in original)

[19] Perhaps, this is why so many contemporary composers, such as György Ligeti and Stockhausen, problematize the concept of time in music. By problematizing time, one automatically problematizes music itself.

Snyder, too, acknowledges that music generates expectations, by giving the impression that musical events lead to or cause other events. It is not real causation that takes place in music, but rather a representation of musical causation. A dominant seventh chord, say, does not necessarily have to resolve to the tonic. There is no physical necessity for this chord to resolve. Rather, the listener expects this chord to resolve accordingly, as a result of the musical conventions and precedents s/he is familiar with. In other words: the listener interprets a dominant seventh chord as wanting to resolve to the tonic. This chord is a representation of musical tension, rather than actually being unstable or tense, whereas the physical makeup of this chord is as stable as any other sound. Thus: tension and resolution, which can lead to temporal development, are not physically present in the music, but are represented by it.[20]

Furthermore, Snyder recognizes a relation between this phenomenon and verbal narratives, in which causation between events also plays a constitutive role. A verbal narrative consists of representations of events and it is the whole of these representations that is related to the reader. Such narratives, then, relate representations of the causality between the events, rather than presenting the actual causation. For example, in a story that tells about a person that falls out of a tree there is no physical necessity for this person to actually hit the ground. The words that make up this story do not necessarily, physically, cause this. The reader might expect the person to hit the ground, but this does not have to happen just because the story implies it. Real, physical causation does not exist in verbal narratives, and neither does it exist in music.

Likewise, musical events themselves do not actually physically exist in music. The principles by which music can be divided into events all depend on musical tension and resolution. Without tension and resolution there would be no perceptible change, and therefore no recognizable musical groupings. Yet, musical tension and resolution are representations. Consequently, musical events are the result of representations. Therefore, musical events are themselves representations, rather than physical entities.[21, 22]

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[20] The notions of musical tension and resolution might have become somewhat of a cliché in musicology. However, I do not take these notions at face value, but I have derived them from the cognitive theory as formulated by Snyder. As I explained in this chapter, his notions of closure and metaphorical causation constitute the basis of my conception of tension and resolution. Moreover, I reinterpret these notions within a narrative framework, which might be less of a cliché as far as musicology is concerned.

[21] Stockhausen's moment form is an attempt to eliminate this particular representative force of music, in order to create music without events that could point to other events, music that literally has no direction. This also implies that

This manner of representing musical events implies that at a certain moment these events give the impression of having reached a closure, which signifies an end or a final state, a sense of completion of an event. Such a closure can be a temporal interval that is larger than the immediately preceding ones, a sound that is significantly different from the immediately preceding sounds or a halt in a continuous change. These kinds of closure are created by the interplay of tension and resolution as represented by the music, and therefore are representations rather than physical entities as well. A closure thus is not necessarily the same as a physical close. Pushing the stop button of a compact disc player in which a disc is playing can create a physical close. This, however, might not give a sense of completion of a musical event as a closure would.

While closures can mark out individual events, this does not automatically imply that such events stand out alone in the music. As I remarked above, an event can metaphorically cause another event, in the sense that one event "points" to the next one. There is some kind of directedness implied between events, a directedness that is constitutive of regarding larger events as the combination of smaller events. An event can also resemble another event, or give in some other way the impression that the event is part of a larger grouping. These larger groupings, Snyder remarks, can be considered as constituting musical phrases, which can themselves again be regarded to be part of even larger events (54-55). Thus, in music, different kinds of closures can be represented: so-called soft closures that function as the basic articulation of individual events and closures of complete musical phrases that have more an effect of finality than soft closures have (59).

One of the reasons why many contemporary compositions are regarded as ungraspable is exactly the inability to hear in the music any kind of closure; in this kind of music no individual events are detectable, nor any kind of directedness and expectations stemming from that directedness, Snyder asserts:

> In a sequence without any recognizable directed pattern of motion, any element can be the last one – we have no basis for predicting. To establish closure, especially at higher levels, we must have some basis for predicting

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such music is not narrative, either. On the other hand, narrativity within the separate events might still be possible.

[22] I do not want to argue that only narrative music can be regarded as consisting of musical events. Yet, the ways in which events can be recognized do in fact often rely on some kind of temporal development, at least some kind of momentary development. Therefore, we may conclude that musical events generally depend on some kind of local musical development, regardless whether the musical work as a whole can be regarded as showing a temporal development, and thus as a musical narrative.

> what we think will come next. Although our predictions may be wrong, the very fact that we can have expectations creates a tension that carries us through a sequence and makes closure possible. (61)

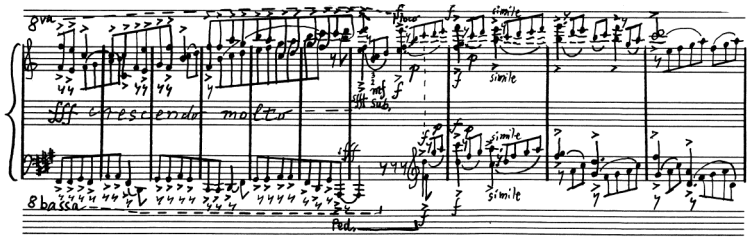
If a listener has no expectations with regard to the music s/he is hearing, then this means that the music does not represent musical events and musical phrases. No tension is created by this music, and thus no possibilities for representations of closure are available. This kind of music is in other words not a representation of a temporal development. One might even argue that in such cases the music is "static," that it stands still, or that it is multi-directional, that it goes everywhere at the same time. There is a sense of motion, but the direction of that motion is anything but unequivocal (Kramer 1988: 46).[23] Many forms of contemporary music are regarded this way, i.e. having no direction at all or going in all directions at the same time. And since I have defined a narrative as being a representation of a temporal development, and this development is dependent on a sense of direction, music that has no direction, or is multi-directional, thus undermines or challenges its narrativity.[24]

György Ligeti's *Désordre* (1985), from his first book of piano etudes, might be considered as a contemporary musical composition in which no clear patterning can be discerned. And indeed, in this piece, the musical events are not represented in a clear, straightforward way. A first impression of this piece may be that it really is the representation of a disorder, as the title suggests. A cacophony of sounds is produced and it seems as if many different musical phrases are played at the same time. A constant stream of eight notes is audible throughout the piece, which makes it initially hard for the listener to discern individual events. One clearly noticeable closure is represented at 1'22" (as performed by Pierre-Laurent Aimard, piano, in the recording released by Sony Classical SK 62308; bar 98 in the score), where the music ascends and the density decreases (ex. 2.4).

While this closure divides the piece into two parts, it is not the only closure that is represented. For, within this abundance of sounds, a melody can be discerned. This melody is articulated during the first four seconds of the piece (bars 1-4), where, amidst ascending notes, octaves are played. These octaves outline a seven-note phrase in the right hand and are accompanied by octaves in the left hand, played in the same rhythm as the octaves in the right hand (ex. 2.5).

[23] However, in the next chapter I will argue that true stasis in music is close to impossible.

[24] I will discuss this issue in more depth in chapter 4.



Example 2.4. György Ligeti, *Désordre*, bars 93-102.
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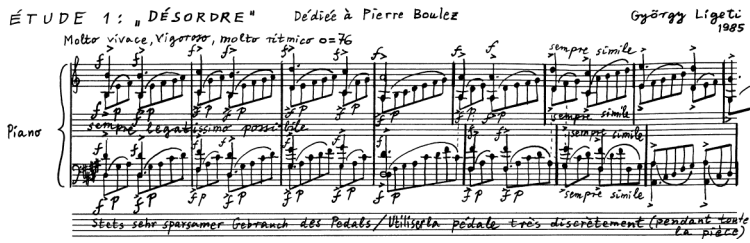

Example 2.5. György Ligeti, *Désordre*, bars 1-7.
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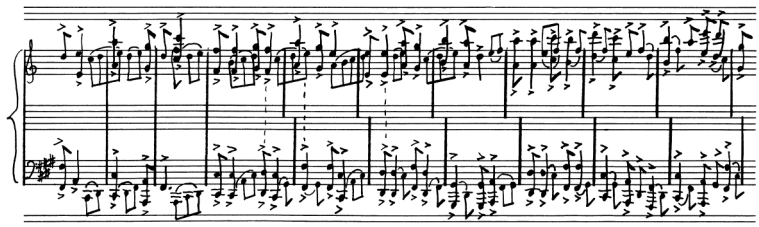
In these bars, closure is represented on different levels: the playing of octaves itself constitute a closure relative to the other notes that are played, while a different closure indicates the finality of the musical phrase. This closure is represented by a rhythmical shift of the octaves in the left hand. At 0'05" (bar 5), these octaves are played one eighth note later than the octaves played in the right hand, causing a blurring of the musical phrase that is transposed and repeated in the right hand. With every transposed repetition of the phrase, articulated by octaves in the right hand, the octaves in the left hand shift relative to this phrase. In this way, it becomes more and more difficult to recognize the phrase, and thus to perceive the representation of events that is constituted by the finality of this phrase. The closure that signified the finality of the initial event was represented by the shift of the octaves in the left hand relative to the right hand. This shift, however, becomes less and less noticeable when the distance between the octaves in the right and left hands becomes larger. This means that this shift cannot any longer be considered as the representation of a closure. Now it is because of the repetition of the phrase itself that events are still represented, but this repetition constitutes a softer closure than the initial one. These repeated events are themselves considered to be part of a larger event, whose finality is indicated by the closure that is represented at 0'51" (bar 54). From this moment on, the phrase is no

longer played in its entirety, but instead only fragments can be heard (ex. 2.6).



Example 2.6. György Ligeti, *Désordre*, bars 54-63.

The closure on another level, too, is absent now. Since from 0'51" (bar 54) onwards the music predominantly consists of octaves, the playing of octaves no longer constitutes a closure on the note level. Moreover, from 0'51" until 1'22" (bars 54-98) no clear events seem to be represented: no distinct closures can be heard, other than those, represented by the varied repetition of short musical phrases. The repetitions of these phrases can however only be regarded as very soft closures, since these repetitions are not clearly articulated. This blurriness in articulation is brought about by playing the phrases in both the right and the left hand, but not at the same time. The result of this is that the beginning and ending of each phrase run over each other. In this way, no distinct closures are represented, and therefore no stable representations of events can be recognizable. The apparent disorder that is represented in this part of the piece is constituted by the absence of strong closures. This disorder also undermines the narrativity of the music at this point. It is not until 1'22" (bar 98) that the initial melody is again articulated, which gives the music a sense of tranquility, although this music remains just as hectic as it initially was. Yet, in this piece a representation of a temporal development can be noticed: a building up of tension that is released at 0'51" (bar 54), followed by a section, which lasts until 1'22" (bar 98), that is unclear, and a final section in which clarity has returned, and that can be regarded as a resolution of the preceding section.

The recognition of (representations of) musical events by the listener as described in this analysis takes place in short-term memory (Snyder 2000: 11-12). Large musical phrases, on the other hand, such as the narrative outline of *Désordre* that I sketched above, can be stored in long-term memory. In long-term memory, so-called schemas reside that are organized sets of memories about sequences of events. When a number of different situations occurring at different times seem to have elements in common, they are eventually merged together into such a

schema. These schemas function as the context, the background, against which sounds, grouped together into events, are interpreted. These schemas are also responsible for the listener having expectations, since, as Snyder calls it, events can semi-activate memory networks, out of which schemas are built, and these networks possess potential associative connections. Hence, when a memory network is semi-activated, it may "[…] enter our peripheral consciousness as a 'feeling' of what is about to happen" (96). This conception of schema is both compatible with Grund's reference class and with the notion of musical convention I described in chapter 1. This notion is also confirmed by experiments, as described by Imberty:

> In a series of experiments on *Sequenza VI* by Berio and *Eclat* by Boulez, [it is shown] that the listeners construct, during successive hearings of the works, which they do not know, and for which cues for tonal structures do not operate, a simplified schema of what they hear in the form of an imprint stored in memory, where the details are laid down in a prototype, unique with respect to the multiple variations from successive hearings. (1993: 332)

Thus, in listening to modern, atonal music, too, schemas are used and new schemas are formed in the listener's memory while listening to the music, in the same way Snyder describes this process.

To recapitulate: a listener is confronted with an audible musical text, in which s/he distinguishes certain acoustic features that function as clues for him/her while recognizing musical events in the text s/he is hearing. This recognition is done in short-term memory, but with the aid of schemas that reside in long-term memory. These events can themselves be part of larger events, which are called musical phrases. The recognition of these phrases is also done by referring to schemas. Hence, the organization of the representation of events, which is done with the aid of closure and the principles by which music can be divided, takes place while perceiving the musical text, whereas the recognition of this organization by the listener is dependent on the schemas s/he refers to. Musical phrases, finally, can eventually be averaged together into an abstract memory framework, when they seem to have aspects in common. This memory framework can both be remembered and function as a new, added schema.[25] Other phrases that stand out in the music, i.e. phrases that differ considerably and are therefore marked, can be stored in long-term memory, too; not to function as a schema, but as part of the memorial trace of a musical piece that remains with the listener when the listening is done.[26]

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[25] This procedure is analogous to the one described in Meelberg (2001).

[26] See also chapter 3, where I will discuss the interrelations between musical events in much more detail.

The listening procedure described above is remarkably similar to the trichotomy musical text – story – fabula. Above, I equated the latter with the trichotomy "perceptible sounds" – "musical structure" – "a series of logically and chronologically related musical events that are caused or experienced by musical actors." A confrontation of a listener with a sounding musical text means that this listener perceives the sounds which make up the musical text. S/he then distinguishes in the music events and larger phrases to which these events belong. In short, s/he discriminates a musical structure. Finally, these phrases are stored in long-term memory, where they can be remembered. And although this last step may not resemble the definition of the musical fabula that is used in this section, it does resemble the alternative description Bal gives of fabula, namely "[…] a memorial trace that remains with the reader after completion of the reading" (1997: xv), with "trace" being a lasting impression of the verbal narrative. Replace "reader," "reading" and "verbal" with "listener," "listening" and "musical," respectively, and the resemblance is restored.[27]

The manner of representing events, as elaborated above, is very similar to the methods Bal mentions, namely grouping on the basis of the identity of the actors involved, classification on the basis of the nature of the confrontation (verbal, mental, (un)successful, etc.), classification by placing events against a time lapse, or grouping on the basis of the locations at which events occur (193-195). Furthermore, musical events can be considered a transition from one state to another, and thereby complying with Bal's definition of an event being a process, an alteration (182). In all three variations of the representation of a musical event, this is indeed the case: the first state consists of the start of a process that can be classified as one of the principles mentioned above, whereas the second state is a closure of some kind, i.e. a temporal interval that is larger than the immediately preceding ones, a sound that is significantly different from the immediately preceding sounds or a halt in a continuous change. Events that are

[27] Another remarkable resemblance is that between the trichotomy musical text – story – fabula and Charles Sanders Peirce's trichotomy Firstness – Secondness – Thirdness. Peirce gives the following description of these categories: "First is the conception of being or existing independent of anything else. Second is the conception of being relative to, the conception of reaction with, something else. Third is the conception of mediation, whereby a first and a second are brought into relation" (1891: 32). Firstness thus is the first moment of observation, of being aware of something, and can be defined by the monad $P(x)$, which describes an entity x that just is. Perceptible sounds can be considered such an entity. Secondness comprises the bringing into relation of x with an entity y. Therefore, it requires a relation $R(x, y)$. A musical event x that is related to an other musical event y can thus be considered an instance of Secondness. Thirdness, lastly, requires the triadic relation $M(x, y, z)$, which describes how an entity x mediates two entities y and z. An example of this relation is the memorial trace x, that relates the listener y to the musical piece z that has been listened to.

constituted by the first principle can be considered as a transition from a state wherein sounds start to be close together in time to a state where this is no longer the case. Following the second principle, events are considered to be a transition from a state wherein sounds begin to resemble each other to a state where this resemblance is fading. Events that are constituted by the third principle, lastly, can be considered a transition from a state of beginning continuity to a state where this continuity no longer takes place.[28]

Location is one of the other elements of the fabula that can be elaborated into a story. Bal argues that location can be articulated with the aspect of space. In principle, location can be deduced from every narrative. Events have to happen somewhere, and therefore, when the narrative does not explicitly state the location where the events happen, the reader will supply one (214-215). Earlier, I defined musical space as the demonstration and/or manipulation of the placement of musical events in the stereo or surround image. Musical space makes the placement of musical events explicit, whereas in musical location this placement remains implicit, i.e. it is not manipulated or thematized. Hence, space and location both can be regarded as the placement of sounds and/or musical events in the stereo or surround image. Space is the explicit demonstration and/or manipulation of this placement. Location, on the other hand, is the placement of sounds and/or events, which remains implicit.

The Characteristics of a Musical Actor

Bal defines an actor as an agent that performs actions, as a function that causes or experiences events. A musical actor therefore can be defined as the musical parameter or parameters that cause closures, i.e. the musical parameter(s) that create(s) musical events. After all, an event is not complete until it has reached some kind of closure, and it is closure that makes the listener recognize the events and its organization in music. As a result, a musical actor can be a temporal interval that is larger than the immediately preceding ones, a significantly different sound or an ending of a continuous change. At the same time, a musical actor also can be the musical parameter(s) that change(s) during a musical event, since an actor not only can cause, but also can experience events. In this case the musical actor consists of those musical elements that are governed by the principle or principles by which the sounds are grouped.

To give an example of the way musical actors can be identified in a musical composition, I would like to refer back to my analysis of

[28] This characterization of musical events again demonstrates that the constitution of the representation of these events generally depends on some kind of temporal development, as I argued above.

Lachenmann's Second String Quartet. In this piece, it is the tension between conventional and unconventional musical sounds that creates a sense of coherence. The closures in this piece are thus constituted by the changes in timbre as well as by (sudden) differences in dynamics, rather than through harmonic or melodic changes. Therefore, the majority of the musical events are represented by timbral and dynamic changes, not by harmony or melody. This implies that the principal musical actors in this piece are the musical parameters timbre and dynamics, for these are the parameters that both create musical events and are the parameters that change during the musical events in this composition. Consequently, in "Reigen seliger Geister," timbre and dynamics are the principal musical actors that both cause and experiences events.[29]

In Lachenmann's piece the principal actors are so-called secondary musical parameters, namely timbre and dynamics. Yet, this does not mean that primary musical parameters such as pitch and rhythm never function as principal actors in contemporary (atonal) musical narratives, as will be apparent in some of the analyses in this study. Likewise, in tonal musical narratives both primary and secondary musical parameters can function as principal actors.

Defining a musical actor as I did above avoids the risk of sketching an anthropomorphic image of this function, a risk other theorists are willing to take. Tarasti, for instance, contends that modalization, the process that humanizes and anthropomorphizes music, in order to be able to unite music with the sphere of human values, is an essential element in the interpretation of music (1994: 72). He argues that through modalization, the listener assigns to musical phrases characteristics like "will," "know," "can" and "must." With the aid of these characteristics the listener can follow the "story" the music is telling.

In Karl's discussion of the musical actor, which he names "role," "will" also is a central notion. Karl purposefully gives an anthropomorphic account of the musical actor. He contends that "[…] roles do not represent independent characters, but should be understood as abstract personifications of opposing forces, impressions, and structures within the psyche of the persona" (1997: 23). This is all in line with his conception of functional plot, and with actantial models, such as Greimas's. He then continues to define the terms protagonist and antagonist, and relates these to the notion of persona. He defines persona as follows: "[A] particular composition will likely not correspond to any particular sequence of mental events,

[29] In Meelberg (2004a), I integrate this interpretation of the musical actor in Lachenmann's string quartet within the analysis of this piece given at the beginning of this chapter.

either real or imaginary, but to an idealized fiction of mental life unfolding in the mind of an unspecified *persona*" (16-17, emphasis in original). A musical work, Karl argues, is not a representation of what goes on in a real person's mind. One should rather regard music as something unreal, a fictitious entity. This entity, however, can be located somewhere, namely in the mind of a fictitious character, or persona, as Karl calls it. This persona is not an abstract listener, but a character that lives through the fictitious mental events represented by the music. This musical representation is established with the aid of the elements called protagonist and antagonist: "The element designated as the protagonist embodies the persona's will to action and the seat of its identity, and for this reason it is the elements to which the fortunes of the persona are most closely linked. It is largely true, therefore, that as the protagonist fares, so too fares the persona" (23). The protagonist can thus be regarded as the persona's driving force. The protagonist is the musical element that comes from the protagonist itself and sets its mind, and therefore the music, in action. The persona is not influenced by the protagonist only, though:

> The two terms [persona and protagonist] are not interchangeable […] since the persona's experience encompasses all of the work's forces and actions both fair and foul, while the term protagonist denotes only the material of the principal theme […] The antagonistic motive might be understood as the persona's mental representation of an extrapersonal force or as some aspect of the self perceived as foreign or inimical to the persona's interests. (23)

While the protagonist is the initial intrapersonal motivator, the antagonist is an extrapersonal counterforce, often even a hostile one. It is the element that complicates the mental life of the persona, but it is at the same time a guarantee that the music does not just end after stating the protagonist. The fact that the antagonist enters into discussion with the protagonist, and thus with the persona's motivation, ensures a prolongation of the music.[30]

It is obvious that Karl does not try to hide the fact that he is giving an anthropomorphic account of the musical actor. Although these actors are not independent characters, they serve as personifications of forces that drive and hinder a persona. The fact that Karl himself speaks about personifications already hints at an anthropomorphic account. And one cannot deny that a persona is an anthropomorphic character, a character that has drives and that encounters setbacks while mentally acting out those drives. Karl, however, does not see any harm in describing musical actors as he does, since he claims that, in music criticism,

[30] I will discuss this "delaying of the musical ending" in greater detail in chapter 4.

> […] it is a common practice to refer to the principal theme of a movement, particularly a movement in sonata form, as its protagonist, and nearly as common to use the term antagonist or some equivalent to refer to elements at odds with the principal material. (19)

However, such an account might not be abstract enough, in the sense that this account might be too much an act of anthropomorphic interpretation. To analyze a musical piece in such an anthropomorphic fashion implies that one restricts oneself to a large extent. In doing so, one cannot allow the music to "speak back," to paraphrase Bal. By trying to fit every musical piece into the same anthropomorphic mold, many elements that are characteristic for that piece have to be disregarded. The end result might be that every musical analysis resembles any other and that the uniqueness of a musical piece is not, or inadequately, represented in the analysis of this piece.[31]

Above, I remarked that the musical equivalent of "character," which is the actor provided with distinctive characteristics, so that it can function as a anthropomorphic figure the narrator tells about, cannot be discussed until after a definition of musical actor is given. Now that I have given this definition, the question is whether or not a musical actor is a basic element that on the level of story can be seen as character. In my definition of a musical actor, i.e. the musical parameter or parameters that cause closures and the musical parameter(s) that change(s) during a musical event, there is room for such an interpretation. Suppose a musical event consists of a sound that, at a given moment t_1, has a certain pitch, and at time t_2 changes pitch. The musical actor then is the parameter itself, i.e. pitch, while the musical character is the changing of that pitch. Hence, the musical actor is the parameter, but otherwise unspecified, whereas the musical character consists of that parameter plus the values assigned to that parameter. In this view, both musical actor and character retain the basic characteristics Bal assigns to these functions, i.e. a function that causes or experiences events, and character seen as an actor provided with distinctive characteristics, respectively. Any anthropomorphic reference, though, is avoided.

Duration in Minimal and Other Music

Time is a very, if not the most, important characteristic of narrative. Bal distinguishes time from the temporal aspects of sequence, frequency and rhythm. Events in the fabula happen during a certain

[31] To a certain extent, all analyses ignore many characteristics of the object due to the method of analysis chosen. It is therefore of great importance to choose a method that "fits" the object, i.e. a method that allows those characteristics of the object to come out, of which the analyst believes are valuable to discuss (see also the preface to this study).

period of time and they occur in a certain order. Both the duration of events and the order in which these events occur can be altered on the level of story.

There are two kinds of duration, Bal explains: crisis, which is a short time span into which events have been compressed; and development, a longer period of time, which, unsurprisingly, shows a development (1997: 208-209). Bal recognizes several implications in regard to the occurrence of either crisis or development: a development may present, in historical order, as much material as seems fit, whereas a crisis implies a restriction, since only a brief period is presented. Bal however stresses the fact that also a development needs selection. Choices always have to be made. Moreover, in a development, global significance is built up slowly from the strings of events, while in crisis the significance is central (210-211).

According to many theorists, duration is a notion that is problematized in minimal music. Tarasti, for instance, argues that

> [m]inimalist works are […] objectifications of series of "now" moments. They represent pure durativity in the sense that they have neither beginning nor end, and, in fact, no temporal articulation. (1994: 285)

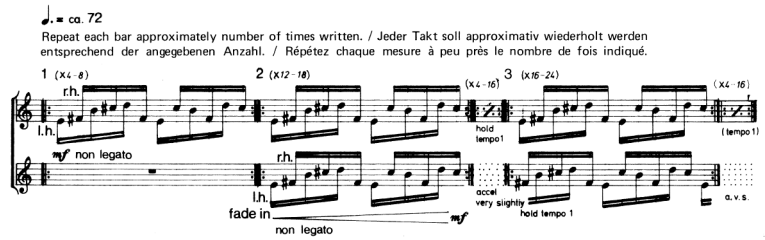
In Tarasti's view, minimal music does not express any tension, and thus does not articulate musical events. There is no sense of beginning or ending, just a seemingly infinite continuation. Tarasti therefore concludes that minimal music is not narrative. Pasler argues along the same lines; she states that "[…] there is no tension inherent in [the] openings [of minimal works], no peripety in the middle, and the transformations these works undergo is little other than the gradual unfolding of an objective process" (1989: 246). Pasler thus does not recognize in minimal music a necessity for this music to develop from a certain starting point to a certain goal. In her view, there is no representation of musical causation taking place in this music, and no expectation is aroused by it. Instead, the music represents a "gradual unfolding of an objective process." With this last phrase, Pasler seems to presuppose that non-minimal music represents in some way a subjective process, but she does not elaborate this notion of objectivity. She seems to refer to the characterization many listeners give of minimal music, i.e. it being sterile, non-emotional or dispassionate, in contrast to music that is regarded as being full of emotions or passions.[32] Her use of the term "objectivity" does not refer to the representation of musical processes alone, but rather to the

[32] In my view, however, many minimal works do have a strong emotional content and are anything other than sterile or emotionless. Moreover, I have no idea how to define "objective" music.

interpretation of musical works as a whole. Yet, one could argue that qualifying music as sterile is far from an objective interpretation.

Pasler regards Steve Reich's *Piano Phase* (1967), a minimal work for two pianos (or two marimbas), as a composition that lacks any tonal or thematic dialectic, and whose notes proceed continuously through repetition, addition and subtraction of the musical pattern, "[…] but without conflict or interruption, direction or goals" (1989: 247). Both she and Tarasti argue that in this and other minimal compositions, the listener does not have anything musical to remember, that s/he cannot "look back" to musical moments that have already been. Instead, the music forces the listener to pay attention to the musical present only (Pasler 1989: 247; Tarasti 1994: 285).

Piano Phase, however, does have a well-defined structure. It consists of three parts, in which a similar process is represented, albeit in different variations. The piece begins with piano 1 playing a twelve-note motif – motif 1, which actually consists of two six-note phrases. Motif 1 is played 4-8 times, while the exact amount is left to the discretion of the player, as with all the repeats in this composition. Then, piano 2 fades in while playing the same motif 1, and together pianos 1 and 2 play motif 1 12-18 times. After that, piano 1 continues playing motif 1 in the same tempo during 4-16 repeats, while piano 2 plays the motif slightly faster, until the moment that motif 1 starts on the second note relative to piano 1. From that moment on, during 16-24 repeats, piano 1 plays motif 1 in the normal way, while piano 2 plays the same motif, but starting on the second and ending on the first note (ex. 2.7).



Example 2.7. Steve Reich, *Piano Phase*, bars 1-3.
Steve Reich "Piano Phase" © 1980 by Universal Edition (London) Ltd., London/UE 16156

This alternation of acceleration and ending on the next note of motif 1 in piano 2, while piano 1 plays the motif in its normal fashion and in a constant tempo, is executed twelve times in total, so that every note of the motif has acted as the first note. The twelfth time the motif in piano 2 again starts on the first note, during 4-8 repeats, while fading out. Finally, piano 1 plays motif 1 4-8 times, while piano 2 remains

silent. With this phrase the representation of the process, and therefore part one of the piece, has been completed. This process can be described as the exposition of a motif in a voice, which after several repeats is doubled by a second voice, which periodically shifts relative to the first voice, until the motif in the second voice regains its original shape. It then slowly fades out, while in the first voice the original motif continues.

In part two of the piece this process is again represented, but with a different motif and ending. Here, piano 1 plays an eight-note motif – motif 2, which consists of notes 1-6, 9 and 12 of motif 1. After 6-8 repeats, piano 2 joins piano 1 while fading in, playing a different eight-note motif – motif 3. Pianos 1 and 2 play these motifs together 16-32 times. After that, piano 2 accelerates very slightly during 6-18 repeats of motif 2 in piano 1, and ends with playing motif 3, but starting on the second note. Piano 2 plays motif 3 in this way against motif 2 in piano 1 during 16-32 repeats. Here too, the alternation of acceleration and ending on the next note of the motif in piano 2 is executed repeatedly, but now eight times, thus, in the eighth time motif 3 is played in its original form against motif 2. These motifs are played together in their original form during 8-24 repeats, while piano 1 fades out. Piano 2 alone finally plays motif 3 8-16 times and therewith concludes part two of the piece.

Part three both has a different beginning and ending as compared to part one. Piano 2 continues by playing the first two notes of motif 3, one time only, and then by playing a new four-note motif – motif 4, that actually consists of notes 3-6 of motif 3. Motif 4 is played 8-24 times by piano 2. Next, piano 1 fades in while playing motif 4 together with piano 2 during 24-48 repeats. Piano 2 then again accelerates slightly during 16-32 repeats of motif 4 in piano 1, until motif 4 starts on the second note. The alternation of acceleration and ending on the next note of the motif in piano 2 is executed four times. The last time, motif 4 is played in its original form in piano 2 against the same motif in piano 1. They play the motif in this way 24-48 times and then stop together, which marks both the ending of part three and of the piece as a whole.

In this study, the working definition of a narrative is that it is the representation of a temporal development. If we want to regard *Piano Phase* as being narrative, we have to ask ourselves whether or not both the process that is represented in this piece and the varied repetition of this representation is a temporal development. Pasler clearly thinks it is not, since she argues that this piece has no direction or goal. Tarasti thinks so, too, for he states that

> [m]inimal music rejects temporal segmentation and traditional functions of musical time: in this music one can no longer distinguish among beginning,

> end, introduction, or other temporal functions of music. Here music really has become a machine that stops time. (1994: 284)

This statement, however, does not hold for *Piano Phase*, since the segmentation in this piece, as I described above, is clearly audible (at least as it is perfomed by Nurit Tilles and Edmund Niemann, pianos, on the recording released by Nonesuch 79451-2). One can distinguish the beginning of each part, for at the beginning a motif is introduced and joined by a second voice. The ending of each process, too, can be easily distinguished: the music thins out until the original motif is sounding alone.

It seems that Tarasti himself, too, is not really convinced of his own statement, since, on the same page where the above statement can be found, he writes:

> In general, the influence of musical time, that almost imperceptible *presque-rien*, is present in musical form *in absentia*. It influences from behind the scenes, and a composer can use it as a strategy for the timing of musical events. Nevertheless, in Reich's music this temporal process has been made present. Reich aims for perfect audibility of musical form and is not fascinated by hidden musical structures. (284, emphasis in original)

Now Tarasti contends that in Reich's music temporality is a prominent element. Moreover, according to Tarasti, Reich attempts to make musical form perfectly audible. But how can one make musical form audible, when the listener cannot distinguish a beginning, end, introduction or other temporal musical functions in minimal music, such as Reich's, as Tarasti also argues? It seems as if Tarasti is contradicting himself here, or that he does not regard Reich's music as minimal music.

A possible explanation for this contradiction is the role repetition plays in minimal music. Due to its repetitive character, minimal music might at the same time deny and put central the notion of temporality. Musical repetition implies a halt with regard to the representation of a temporal development, but it does not imply a halt in the representation of movement. Repetition does not give the impression of the music standing still. One just has to listen to contemporary electronic dance music such as house or techno to become convinced of this. This kind of dance music is very repetitive, but does at the same time represent a fierce movement. And since movement necessarily has to happen in time, it is closely tied to temporality. Perhaps it is in this sense that Tarasti considers minimal music to be a perfect representation of musical form, with musical form being musical temporality. But according to Tarasti, repetitive music does reject temporal segmentation and thus the traditional function of musical time.

Furthermore, Tarasti remarks that, since repetition is such a dominant characteristic in minimal works, it does not function as it does in conventional narrative:

> [W]hat is essential in repetitive music is that the principle of repetition has shifted to the position of the dominant idea of a work of art. Thus it no longer performs the task assigned to it by the Russian Formalists, that of producing surprise. The crucial artistic device now becomes the slightest change in the redundancy created by repetition. (1994: 284)

Instead of repetition being a marked term, in minimal music it becomes the unmarked term, whereas the deviation from repetition becomes the marked term. In *Piano Phase*, the accelerations and the changing from one to two voices, and vice versa, can be considered to be the marked terms. Tarasti acknowledges the fact that minimal music can represent marked terms, or crucial artistic devices as he calls them, whereas Pasler is not convinced of this. She argues that minimal music cannot represent conflict or interruption (1989: 247). But without conflict or interruption no marked term can be represented, as I will discuss in detail in the next chapter. Moreover, Tarasti disagrees with himself: he denies the possibility of hearing any segmentation in repetitive music, but as soon as marked terms can be distinguished, and Tarasti argues that this is also possible in minimal music, segmentation takes place. Only music in which no marked terms are distinguishable has no recognizable segmentation, which is, as I outlined above, not the case in *Piano Phase*. If we disregard the repeats, this piece would consist of 57 bars, and in 56 of those a new, clearly distinguishable, event is represented (the first and last bar of part one are identical). The fabula of *Piano Phase*, if this piece were to be regarded as being narrative, thus contains 56 events, and with the aid of repetition this fabula is elaborated into a story. The piece could actually comply with the definition of narrative, if the represented processes were temporal developments. My contention is that this is indeed the case.

Above, I argued that in *Piano Phase* the beginning and ending of each process is clearly audible. Disregarding the repeats, in between the beginning and the ending one can hear a distinct development. It is because of the repeats that this development is less distinct, but that does not mean that with repetition the processes are no longer temporal developments. Rather, repetition in *Piano Phase* functions as a means to delay the ending of the piece, and not so much functions as what Tarasti calls the dominant idea of this work. Instead, the accelerations of one voice against an unchanging second voice, as well as the resulting phase shifts between these voices, constitute the principal idea. It is only one conflict, i.e. the acceleration of one voice against an unchanging second voice, which is represented in different contexts.

This conflict and its various representations are compressed into a short time span in the fabula, viz. the 57 bars mentioned above. If this piece would not make use of repeats and instead would just be a representation of this fabula, the execution of the piece would only take a mere 72 seconds, instead of the twenty minutes *Piano Phase* lasts.[33] Therefore, I propose to regard *Piano Phase* as the representation of a crisis – the single conflict described above – that, with the aid of repetition, is elaborated into a story. These repetitions do not stop the representation of movement, but they do delay the unfolding of the crisis in its various contexts, and thus delay the representation of the temporal development.

Piano Phase is a musical narrative. It can be considered as a representation of a temporal development, and it thus complies with the basic definition of narrative. Furthermore, in addition to complying with the basic definition of narrative, narrative elements such as musical actors (texture, i.e. the sounding together of the two pianos) and musical fabula can be identified in the piece.

In this chapter I have demonstrated that many musical pieces comply with this study's working definition of narrative, i.e. it being the representation of a temporal development. All music, even the shortest piece, is temporal, and some musical works can be regarded as implying some kind of development. Many musical works elicit expectations, by giving the impression that musical events lead to or cause other events. Yet, there exists no real physical causation in music. It is the listener who interprets musical events as wanting to lead to other events, which amounts to musical expectation. Hence, music represents tension and resolution, rather than actually being tense (unstable) or resolved (stable). This interplay of tension and resolution results in the representation of a development. As a consequence, many musical pieces can be regarded as representations of a temporal development, and thus as being narrative.

But, if musical narrativity is possible, and the above description of musical narrative is correct, this could imply that many, if not most, musical works are narrative. And if so, would this not make the category of musical narrative useless, as for instance Carolyn Abbate (1991) argues? Anne Sivuoja-Gunaratnam remarks in this respect:

[33] The indicated tempo of *Piano Phase* is 72 dotted quarter notes per minute, which makes 432 sixteenth notes per minute. Part one consists of 27 bars with 12 sixteenth notes each, which makes 324 sixteenth notes in total. Part two consists of 19 bars times 8 sixteenth notes, which makes 152 sixteenth notes. Part three has one bar containing two sixteenth notes plus 10 bars times 4 sixteenth notes, which makes 42 sixteenth notes. The piece as a whole, without repeats, thus consists of 518 sixteenth notes. The tempo is 432 sixteenth notes per minute, which means that the total duration of the piece without repeats is: 518 divided by 432, which equals 72 seconds.

> Is there a danger in having a very extensive paradigm of musical narratives and a very small number of pieces that can be categorized as non-narrative? I don't sense the danger Abbate warns about. In fact, there is nothing negative in the supposed "interpretational promiscuity" of the term, because "narrative" is not the end or the conclusion of any analysis or interpretation. On the contrary – it is just the beginning. To ask, as does Abbate […], whether or not a composition is "narrative," as though that were the final goal of analysis, is a rather unfruitful and somewhat strange line of inquiry. The parallel in literary criticism would be to declare a certain literary/fictional text or passage thereof as narrative, and to shut off the inquiry at that point […] the really interesting questions regarding narrative are qualitative: how the narrative is constructed, how its boundaries are defined, how it is mediated. (1997: 137-138)

The category of narrative literature is not rendered useless because all novels belong to this category. Moreover, analysis does not stop with the recognition that music belongs to a certain category. The categorization of music as narrative, as well as the identification of narrative elements in the music, is not an aim in itself. It is only the beginning of a more profound analysis of a musical piece. It is the foundation, the starting point, of a deeper analysis of a musical piece, deeper in the sense that the analysis goes beyond the mere labeling of musical elements. Analysis can be more than just a description of a given object – which labeling comes down to. Through analysis we might be able to articulate the potentialities of a given object, i.e. expose the many different ways an object may invite the observer to experience this object.

And this is what my intention is in this study: investigating the narrative potentialities of a musical composition. Thus, I do not only try to determine whether or not a given piece can be regarded as a narrative. Rather, I aim at giving an account of what it means for a musical work to be narrative. In the next chapter I will do this by discussing the function of temporality within a musical narrative.

3 TENSE

Musical Time, Musical Tense?

A piece of music manifests itself in time. It needs a certain amount of time in order to let it be able to present itself to the listener. A spectator of a non-temporal work of art, such as a painting, also needs time to be able to look at and interpret the art work, but the object itself does not need time to unfold its presence. At every instance in time a non-temporal artwork is exposed in its entirety to the spectator. Every moment a spectator looks at such a work it is completely visible. However, as Bal (1999) shows in her analyses of some of Caravaggio's paintings, the viewer might be "guided" through the painting by the painting itself. In that case, the reading of such a work of art, a work that in itself is non-temporal, becomes a temporal process. Moreover, it can take a lot of time before the spectator gains any insight in a visual work of art, but that does not change the fact that the work as a perceptible object is always completely available.[1] Conversely, to perceive a piece of music in its entirety takes as much time as the piece requires to be performed.

Because music is a temporal art, this medium is an excellent candidate for representing a temporal development, and thus to be narrative. Richard Klein remarks that "[m]usic represents time as a medium in which both the inner historicity of subjective existence and the history of the external natural world reside."[2] Music represents the temporality both of the personal subjectivity of the listener and of natural processes, and these two temporalities are united in music. According to Klein, subjective time, the time as experienced by the listener, is measured against objective time, the time as indicated by our clocks, and vice versa. Albert Mayr seeks an explanation for this characteristic of music. He considers music to be a powerful *Zeitgeber*, i.e. an environmental factor that determines the temporal characteristics in the behavior of organisms (1993: 81). He remarks

[1] I realize that this is, to a certain extent, a gross generalization; the viewer cannot perceive many visual works in one instant because this is not possible physically, such as installation artworks and labyrinths. But this does not alter the fact that such works of art, too, are always completely present at any instance of time, in contrast to art forms such as film and music.

[2] "Musik bringt Zeit als ein Medium zur Darstellung, in dem sich die innere Historizität subjektiver Existenz und der geschichtliche Naturraum der Welt gemeinsam befinden." (Klein 2000: 62, my translation) By using the term "reside" ("befinden"), Klein seems to give an essentialist account of music, which might not be desirable. Music might be able represent subjective and historic time, but does not actually contain these forms of time.

that "[…] until not so long ago, sound was the privileged medium through which we perceived (or were made to perceive) many natural and social temporalities in the environment" (88). Through sound human beings are made aware of the temporal nature of natural and social phenomena. Music has the ability to mark out time, too, since music consists of a succession of sounds. As I explained in the previous chapter, this succession can give the listener the impression that the music is moving forward, which in reality it does not. Yet it is the impression of this forward motion, and the expectations this impression of movement generates, that enables music to mark out time. In that chapter I concluded that we might call this impression musical development, which at the same time can be regarded as a temporal development.[3]

In this chapter I will discuss the relation between the representation of temporality in musical and verbal narrative, in order to see whether or not there are crucial differences between the two. Abbate, for instance, argues that, because music cannot represent a past tense, music cannot be narrative. She states that "[…] musical works have no ability to narrate in the most basic literary sense; that is, to posit a narrating survivor of the tale who speaks of it in the past tense" (1989: 230). I will elaborate my doubts regarding Abbate's usage of the term "narrating survivor" later in this chapter. For now I just want to point out that, by referring to the narrator as "survivor," Abbate seems to suggest that a narrator always is character bound. Moreover, it is a special kind of character-bound narrator, namely one that has lived through a particular experience and tells the reader or listener about it. Abbate does not seem to acknowledge the possibility of an external narrator. And thus she can claim that, because music does not posit a narrating survivor, the representation of temporality in music is not compatible with the representation of temporality in narrative:

> Does music have a past tense? Can it express the pastness all literary narrative accomplishes by use of past or preterit verb tenses, "it was early spring, and the second day of our journey." To linger over "was" as opposed to "is" is to exclude music from the canon of narrative genres. (228)

But a painting also presents itself as "now," just as music does. Nevertheless, many pictures can be read in a narrative manner (see for instance Bal and Bryson 1991: 202-206). Moreover, Abbate argues that this pastness tells us that there is a narrator, whereas in music, in which, in her view, the time of telling is the time being told about, the narrator is absent (1989: 228). However, as I have shown in the

[3] With "musical development" I do not refer to the second part of the sonata form, but rather to a development that is noticeable in music.

previous chapter, a musical narrator can be pointed out in music, regardless whether the musical story is told in the past or otherwise.

In regard to Abbate's view the following questions arise: (1) Can we speak of a past tense in music? (2) Does narrating in the most basic literary sense indeed imply the positing of what Abbate calls a "narrating survivor" who necessarily speaks of the narrative in the past tense? (3) Is the representation of a past tense a necessary condition for narrativity? In order to address these questions, I discuss the temporal nature of music and relate the outcomes of this discussion to the way temporality is represented in verbal narrative. More specifically, I relate these outcomes to Susan Fleischman's theory of temporal markedness in narrative. She presents comprehensive ideas about the relation between tense and storytelling.

Fleischman regards the use and the switching of tenses in narratives as a textual strategy for creating cohesion and signaling different levels within a story. She focuses especially on the grammatical category of tense as used in narrative,

> […] and specifically on their nonreferential or pragmatic functions. While these functions are less obvious and less well understood than the basic referential or grammatical functions, an understanding of the pragmatics of tense-aspect usage is central to the broader objective that this book proposes: the development of a theory of tense in narrative. (1990: 1)

Fleischman thus argues that the nonreferential and pragmatic use of tense in narrative differs from the use of tense in ordinary language. She contends that the basic function of tense in ordinary language is to establish the temporal location of situations predicated in a sentence or discourse, whereas in narrative discourse the function of tense is pragmatic in nature. "Pragmatic" is understood as

> […] referring to all types of meaning dependent on context. Of primary concern here are, on the one hand, *discourse context* – the portion of discourse or text that surrounds a given sentence or sequence of sentences – as well as the nature of the text as a whole (narration, conversation, oratory), and, on the other, *situation context* – the communicative context or setting in which the text as a speech-act occurs. (3, emphasis in original)

This means that in narrative the function of tense is to establish relations between parts of texts and the text in which these parts occur and between the text as a whole and the situation in which this text is related. The function of tense in narrative thus is not limited to having a referential meaning only. Rather, tense in narrative has a pragmatic function. Fleischman divides this function into organizing and expressive functions. These functions guarantee that a text is internally coherent, that it fits in the setting in which this text is communicated,

and that it can relate personal attitudes towards what is being talked about. According to Fleischman, specifically these pragmatic functions are the functions of tense that are exclusive to narrative (5-7). The principal claim she makes is that "[…] the specifically narrative functions of tense and aspect developed as motivated pragmatic responses to the conditions of narrative performance in interactive oral contexts" (7). The special use of tense in narrative, i.e. the pragmatic functions of tense, is the result of the oral roots of narration.

With regard to oral storytelling Fleischman makes a remark that is particularly interesting from a musicological point of view:

> In oral cultures, the unfolding of narratives is not so much linear as circular: oral narrators frequently return to events previously narrated and re-present them such that new meanings emerge cumulatively through repetition. (13)

According to Fleischman repetition is an important characteristic in oral storytelling, and through the retelling of events new meanings are attached to these events. Tarasti recognizes a similar phenomenon in music:

> One of the basic properties of the temporal course of music is its irreversibility. Because of this fact there is no symmetrical repetition in music at all, and even in simple ABA form, the second A differs from the first. A "second time" does not exist for the receiver of a musical intonation. (1994: 61-62)

Musical events that appear for a second time cannot be interpreted in the same manner as the first appearance of this event. One cannot erase that what has sounded between an event and its repetition, and these sounds influence the meaning attached to the second appearance of the event, just as in oral storytelling.

Since repetition seems to be such an important characteristic in oral narration, it is all the more remarkable that repetition is considered problematic in musical narrativity:

> Recapitulations and other extended formal repetitions have posed a perennial dilemma for narrative and stage-dramatic accounts of musical structures because the architectonic requirements they satisfy in music have no counterparts in narrative literature or drama. Consequently, musically satisfying repetitions are often found to be dramatically superfluous, and have been discounted, rationalized, or simply left unacknowledged for in interpretations of musical plot. (Karl 1997: 27)

Although it is doubtful whether repetitions indeed have no literary or dramatic equivalent, as Karl argues, it definitely has a counterpart in oral narration. Therefore, Fleischman's account for the occurrence of

repetition in oral storytelling can at the same time serve as an account for the occurrence of musically satisfying repetitions in musical narratives. For oral narrators frequently return to previously narrated events as well, and re-present them such that new meanings emerge cumulatively through repetition.[4]

A last function of tense in narrative that Fleischman recognizes is a metalinguistic function. With this function a language can talk about itself, it can signal a particular style, register, genre or type of language. "For languages that have an explicit narrative morphology," Fleischman argues, "at least one function of this morphology is metalinguistic: it identifies a discourse" (6). This metalinguistic function is closely linked to the pragmatic functions described above, since it identifies a discourse and therefore establishes a relation between the text and the situation in which the text occurs. Thus, tense in narrative is not only used to represent time (the referential function), but also to establish relations between parts of texts and to relate texts to other texts (the pragmatic function) and discourses (the metalinguistic function).

In music, too, relations with other musical texts and discourses can be established. A musical phrase may refer to another phrase within the same composition, by copying the shape of a phrase, for instance, or to another musical composition (the pragmatic function), or to musical genres or traditions (the metalinguistic function). Rokus de Groot even argues that music can refer to different time worlds:

> [In music] [t]here is an aspect of chronology, like in the relation between "archaic" or "primeval" (e.g., nature in its pristine state like in the Introduction to [Richard Wagner's] *Das Rheingold*) and "present-day" (the latter being more evidently tied to the musical idiom current at the time of composition). (2001: 123)

References to time worlds can be established by the juxtaposition of contemporary musical idioms and ideas about the past or future that are expressed in music. These ideas often have a mythical foundation and therefore these time worlds are fictitious. Regarding nineteenth-century music, for instance, De Groot remarks that "[t]he idea of an opposition between a world of 'being' and non-progressivity, and a world of 'becoming' and progressivity becomes audible in the harmonic contrast between drone-based music and highly modulatory music" (123). The past is considered as being non-progressive, and therefore represented by non-progressive music, De Groot argues, whereas the present equals progression and therefore is represented by music that is harmonically complex.

[4] In the next chapter I will discuss musical repetition in more detail.

However interesting the idea of music referring to different time worlds might be, especially since it would allow us to speak of a musical past, present and future, it cannot really be considered to be a musical equivalent of tense in narrative. Although this kind of temporal reference would comply with a metalinguistic function of tense, I would not consider it to be a musical equivalent of tense just because of this compliance. For the pragmatic and metalinguistic functions of tense might be unique to narrative, the relations established by these functions can also be created by means other than tense. Citations, choice of words, or the emulation of a style, for instance, can also function as means to relate a text to other texts. In short: tense in narrative might imply relations between texts and other texts and discourses, but the existence of these relations in narrative does not necessarily imply tense. Likewise the existence of relations between musical texts and other musical texts, genres or time worlds (in short: intertextuality) does not necessarily imply musical tense.

There is, however, at least one tense that music can express, namely the present. Music can only present itself in the "now," as David Clarke remarks: "An essential aspect of the relationship between perception and time is that the former, strictly defined, can take place only in the present" (1989: 113). Therefore, music always unfolds itself in the present. Yet Fleischman remarks that the present tense, the tense that is most frequently used in everyday language, has an "anti-narrative" function (1990: 6). This would imply that music ultimately is antinarrative. A paradox arises here, for on the one hand music, considered as unfolding in the present, is anti-narrative, but on the other hand music is a very appropriate means to represent time, and thus to be narrative, precisely because it is present in a continuing present.

But why is this continuing presence in the present so appropriate to represent time? According to Günter Figal, time exactly is the concatenation of the present, it is "its decomposition into different steps and stages; it is the modification of presence into the past, present and future, and only to be recognized as such on the ground of this uniform presence."[5] Presence, which always resides in the present, is the means by which time can be perceived. Past and future can only be recognized when there is a present, a now. There can be no time without a present. This is why music is a powerful *Zeitgeber*, since, as Clarke contends, listening to music takes place in a continuing present, which means that music acts as a perpetual supplier of temporal reference points.

[5] "[…] ihr Auseinanderlegen in verschiedene Schritte und Stadien; sie ist die Modifikation von Präsenz in Vergangenheit, Gegenwart und Zukunft und als solche nur auf dem Grund einheitlicher Präsenz zu erkennen." (Figal 2000: 16, my translation)

But, as Clarke himself remarks, only in a strict sense music exists only in the present. Edward A. Lippman argues similarly. He regards the existence of both a musical present, past and future as the most important characteristic of music:

> [T]he fundamental process that governs musical structure would seem to be one in which the patterns falling back into the past continue to be present either in images or in their influence on later perception. Music is a play of new patterns against older ones, a play in which an astonishingly close comparison of new with old permits the most various and subtle formal interrelationships. (1984: 140)

Lippman describes the same process I elaborated in the previous chapter. A musical listening experience consists of the joint activity of the retention of past sounds, comparing these sounds to those that are sounding now, in the present, and predicting what will sound next, in the future. His remark that music is a play of new patterns against older ones presupposes, however, that music always allows for the representation of a before and after, a view that might not be shared by everyone. Svetlana Neytcheva, for instance, thinks otherwise:

> The only guarantee of [the] illusion [of time as an "image of time moving"] is in fact the stability of the earlier-simultaneously-later pattern. In music (especially in post-tonal music) this pattern is tested by any peculiar order of past-present-future events. "Destroying the illusion of time," hence, is regarded as the result of this peculiar way (one can think of it as "the crux of creativity") of ordering musical events and treating musical gestures. (2001: 102)

Neytcheva argues that the representation of a temporal development ("the illusion of time as an image of time moving") is challenged by atonal music, since in this kind of music musical relations are problematized. Atonal contemporary music then would just be a presentation of a succession of "now" moments, instead of being, in the case of musical narrative, a representation of a temporal development. In her view the illusion of time can only be established by a certain ordering of events in the music, which correlates with Lippman's account of musical listening. According to Neytcheva this ordering of musical events is

> […] a kind of temporal structure based on the correspondence or overlapping of the past-present-future gestures and the simple order of earlier-simultaneously-later events, which principle is manifested through all musical devices involved. If the linear succession of now-moments in a given work is composed unequivocally as a linear and goal-directed movement, and there is no ambiguity as to past-present-future gestures being used in support to this movement, the illusion of time is the result.

> This result – certainly in the case of tonal music – depends on the listener's knowledge of certain conventions. (102)

Representation of time in music can only be established when this music is unidirectional, and musical unidirectionality equals the possibility of distinguishing a past, present and future in music, which in part depends on the listener's knowledge of musical conventions. But by explicitly distinguishing between tonal and atonal music Neytcheva seems to imply that only tonal music is capable of representing temporal development. If atonal music is indeed incapable of doing so, then Lippman's suggestion that the existence of a musical present, past, and future is the most important characteristic of music has to be reconsidered, since, atonal music would lack this characteristic. Moreover, in that case I would have to rethink my assertion that contemporary music can represent a temporal development.

Tonal, functional harmony gives tonal music a sense of direction and a goal, but this can also be constituted by means other than functional harmony. Yet Neytcheva regards atonal music as attempts at breaking the "illusion of time" in music, and in doing so eliminating the possibilities of representing a temporal development, exactly because this kind of music is not based on functional harmony. But music actualizes such representations not just through functional harmony, although that is a very efficient means. As I have argued in the previous chapter many musical pieces can be regarded as representations of events. A musical event can be represented either by sounds that are close together in time, that resemble each other, or that represent a continuing process. But in order to be able to represent such events, music has to be more than just a presentation of successive "now" moments. Rather, musical events are constituted by transitions from one state to another: an initial state consisting of the beginning of a process, and a second state being a closure of some kind, i.e. a temporal interval that is larger than the immediately preceding ones, a sound that is significantly different from the immediately preceding sounds or a halt in a continuous change. By contrasting new sounds with past sounds closures, and thus events, can be represented. These closures and events can be represented through functional harmony, but also by other means, as I have demonstrated in my analysis of Ligeti's *Désordre* in chapter 2. This piece definitely is an atonal composition, but in this piece events and temporality are nevertheless represented. Therefore, this atonal piece does not distort the illusion of time, and a past, present, and future can still be sensed without making use of functional harmony. *Désordre*, being an atonal composition, is more than just a presentation of "now" moments.

While it can be said that music starts in the present, namely with the presentation of sounds, these sounds are subsequently regarded as belonging to a musical event. Sounds shift from belonging to a process – the succession of sounds – to belonging to a static group – the musical event. Therefore, at two different points in time, sounds can be interpreted differently; "[…] a phenomenological difference which in terms of time consciousness can only be described as an opposition between past and present" (Clarke 1989: 117). In the present a sound presents itself as part of a continuing process, an unfolding, whereas in the past a sound is part of the representation of an event. When a musical past would not exist music could not last, as David Burrows remarks:

> [T]he coupling of the flow of sounds with the attention of perceivers is controlled by the temporality of the sounds, and is therefore limited to a now whose content changes ceaselessly. Music takes place in its own almost total sonic absence. (1997: 529)

The presentation of the flow of sounds is done in the present only, but experiencing these sounds as music, and thus recognizing the representation of musical events, can only be done in relation to the past. The contents of the musical present never stays the same and cannot be retained as such in the present. In sum: in music the relation between present and past equals the relation between perceptible sounds and represented events.

This view on the musical present and past might be helpful in answering the question whether or not there is a musical equivalent of tense in narrative. Fleischman argues that tense is relational: tense establishes a relation between location time and reference time (1990: 15), with the time of the narrator being reference time and location time the time of the events told (18). Can a similar distinction between location time and reference time be found in music? In the previous chapter I remarked that a narrator is an agent that relates a story in a particular medium, it is that agent that utters the signs that constitute the text. Likewise, a musical narrator is that agent that utters a succession of sounds by which a musical story, consisting of musical events, is related. The act of uttering a succession of sounds takes place in the present, for, as I already remarked, music always unfolds in the present. Therefore, the musical storytelling is done in the present, and thus reference time in musical narrative is the present in which the music presents itself. Location time, then, can be considered to be the time in which musical sounds are part of the representation of musical events, which is the past. As a result, because tense establishes a relation between reference time and location time, musical tense is supposed to establish a relation between the unfolding of musical

sounds and the representation of events, that is, between the musical present and the musical past.

The Discrete Musical Past Versus the Continuous Sounding Present

To answer the question what musical tense exactly is, we have to ask in which manner the relation between the unfolding of musical sounds and the representation of events is established. Therefore, the question I want to focus on now is in what way a relation between a continuous stream of sounds and static, discrete musical events is effectuated. Since studies into the experience and ontology of time address similar issues, I will examine some of these theories here. Johan van Benthem, for instance, tries to show in his study of the ontology of time that both the view of time as consisting of points and the idea that time consists of periods can be translated into a view of time as consisting of events. If Van Benthem succeeds in showing this, then perhaps an answer to our question about musical tense might be closer at hand.

In his 1991 study Van Benthem states that time is traditionally regarded as a set of points, or instants, moments, without duration. Besides this traditional "point view" there exists a different tradition, in which it is claimed that periods, or intervals, time spans, should be regarded as temporal individuals (1991: 3). In everyday life, however, experiences are being perceived as events. Both the "point view" of time and the "period view" seem to be abstractions of the way time is presented to the human subject (4), and therefore Van Benthem tries to translate both points and periods into events.

When time is being considered as a set of points, Van Benthem remarks, the question arises of how "complete" this set is. One possibility is to consider this set to be "infinitely divisible," which implies that a continuum is approached. This infinite divisibility means that between every arbitrary couple of two members of a set, of which one member precedes the other, there is another element (17).[6] When a set is not infinitely divisible, but discrete instead, then there is no other element between two successive elements (18).[7] In these two possibilities time is regarded as an infinitely divisible and a discrete set of points, respectively, but according to Van Benthem they still do not form a point representation of time. In order to attain such a representation some additional conditions need to be formulated. These are the condition of transitivity, of irreflexivity, of linearity and of

[6] The formal representation of his possibility is given here (Van Benthem 1991: 17):
$\forall x\, \forall y\, (x < y \rightarrow \exists z\, x < z < y)$

[7] A formal logic representation would be the following (Van Benthem 1991: 18):
$\forall x\, \forall y\, [x < y \rightarrow \exists z\, (x < z \wedge \neg \exists u\, x < u < z)]$,
$\forall x\, \forall y\, [x < y \rightarrow \exists z\, (z < y \wedge \neg \exists u\, z < u < y)]$

succession. These conditions are necessary, for time goes forth and does not retrace its steps. Time has to keep on "flowing forwards." Transitivity means that, for every *x*, *y*, and *z*, if *x* precedes *z* and *z* precedes *y*, *x* precedes *y*. Irreflexivity means that there can be no standstill. Linearity ensures that the "stream of time" only has one "bank," which means that the stream of time flows in one direction only, and succession ensures an infinite expansion of the set, in order for time to be able to go on infinitely (15-17).[8]

This account of time is in many respects similar to the way music presents itself. The conditions of transitivity, irreflexivity, linearity and succession also hold for the continuous unfolding of musical sounds. There are, however, two problems when we apply this account to music. Firstly, since music is finite it does not expand infinitely, and therefore the condition of succession has to be reformulated accordingly when applied to music.[9] Secondly, these conditions hold for a point representation of time, which seems to imply discreteness. Van Benthem himself implicitly acknowledges that this point representation might not cohere with real continuous time, since he remarks that the "point view" of time seems to be an abstraction of the way time is presented to the human subject (4). Yet the unfolding of sounds is not necessarily a discrete process, despite the fact that sounds, and not just one single sound, are unfolding in time. The plural form of the noun "sound" does seem to hint at discreteness. But, as I argued in chapter 2, it is the retention in the listener's memory, and not the actual moment of perception, of some particularly significant changes that make the listener regard the music as divided into events, and thus into discrete parts. The listener regards music as being divided into discrete parts after having perceived the presentation of sounds. Therefore, the sounds themselves, as presented, form a continuous flow. Even moments in which nothing is sounding belong to this continuum for, as Wolfgang Rathert argues, "in musical time the 'not-sounding' is on the same footing with the sounding."[10] Silence, that what does not "sound," has the same status in the temporal unfolding of music. It is only in hindsight that the listener perceives the difference between sound and silence, and might consider this difference as a closure of an event. Figal formulates this view as

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[8] In formal logic these conditions read as follows (Van Benthem 1991: 15-17):

$\forall x \forall y \forall z (x < z < y \rightarrow x < y)$	Transitivity
$\forall x \neg x < x$	Irreflexivity
$\forall x \forall y (x = y \vee x < y \vee y < x)$	Linearity
$\forall x \exists y\, y < x, \forall x \exists y\, x < y$	Succession

[9] Music can, however, give an impression of infinity, of a ceaseless continuation. I will discuss this phenomenon in more detail in the next chapter.

[10] "Für die musikalische Zeit ist das 'Nicht-Klingende' eine dem Klingenden gleichgestellte Dimension." (Rathert 2000: 302, my translation)

follows: "The development of moments and their interrelations within a piece, the suggested tempo in which the piece is experienced, and the overall unity of its moments can be distinguished in reflection, but hardly in experience."[11] During the actual perception of music one cannot differentiate between discrete musical moments, let alone recognize relations between musical events; all this is done after the fact. In other words: the notion of discreteness is something that belongs to the musical past, as opposed to the presentation of sounds, which happens in the present. This presentation is a continuous process rather than a discrete one, for musical discreteness can only be perceived in relation to the past.

Despite the apparent purely discrete account of time he has given thus far, Van Benthem nevertheless addresses the question what the exact difference is between discrete and continuous time with the aid of this account and by consulting an ancient colleague. In defining continuity and discreteness he follows Aristotle, who formulates the distinction between the two as follows: "the continuous is that of which two adjacent parts have the same boundary, the discrete is that of which two adjacent parts have two direct boundaries" (quoted in Van Benthem 1991: 30). Van Benthem interprets Aristotle in the following manner: a time span A, in which every point x precedes a point y, and all points x belong to A, is continuous if and only if these points x are being preceded by points y. In this way A resembles an ink spot that spreads (30).[12]

Van Benthem concludes that one cannot decide whether time is continuous or discrete. Both interpretations have their merits, depending on the discourse in which time is discussed. Van Benthem contends, however, that a transition from a point to a period structure can take place, and vice versa. A representation of the structure of time can change from points to periods and vice versa, where the points are "atoms," the smallest elements of the structure that can be grouped into periods (80-99). These periods can themselves be grouped into events.

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[11] "Die Entwicklung des Werkes in seinem Momenten und sein Sinnzusammenhang, das von ihm vorgegebene Erfahrungstempo und die konstellative Zusammengehörigkeit seiner Momente lassen sich in der Reflexion, kaum jedoch in der Erfahrung trennen." (Figal 2000: 17, my translation) The question remains, however, whether or not one can actually experience something without reflection. See for instance Van Alphen (1999), and chapter 5. Therefore, the distinction Figal makes between experience ("Erfahrung") and reflection ("Reflexion") is rather dubious. That is why I speak about "perception" and not about "experience."

[12] This conception of continuity is formally represented below (Van Benthem 1991: 30):

$$\forall A\,[(\exists x\, x \in A \wedge \forall x\,(x \in A \rightarrow \exists y\,(x < y \wedge y \in A)) \wedge \forall x\,(x \in A \leftrightarrow \forall y\,(y < x \rightarrow y \in A))) \rightarrow \forall x\,(x \in A \rightarrow \forall y\,(x < y \rightarrow x \in A))]$$

Finally, a (finite) set of events constitutes a context. Comparisons of and causal relations between events can only be made within a context, and thus only when there is more than one event, since one event has to be compared to another event. According to Van Benthem these events constitute the subject's primary source of information with regard to the world. They are the simple generalizations of complex occurrences, themselves built out of periods that consist of points, in the case of discreteness, or of a continuous "ink spot" (113-120).

There are many similarities between Van Benthem's account of events and my discussion of musical events in the previous chapter. Van Benthem mentions the ability to compare events, the occurrence of causal relations between events and the fact that events are simplifications of reality, which is all compatible with the account of musical events I gave earlier. However, the aforementioned presupposition of Van Benthem's method, namely to regard time as consisting of points only, remains. Even when he tries to give a formal definition of the continuum, he uses (discrete) points that belong to time spans. To claim that a continuous time span is really an infinitely divisible set, in which the points are infinitely small, does not change this, since Van Benthem keeps on referring to points. Yet one cannot regard a continuum as consisting of points, as George E. Hughes and Maxwell J. Cresswell argue. They hold that time considered as being continuous means that between every two moments there is a third, which means that it is no longer useful to talk about the next moment after a given moment (1996: 180). But we have seen that Van Benthem always talks about moments or points, and therefore, according to the definition Hughes and Cresswell formulate, his conception of time cannot really be continuous. Time, considered as being discrete, on the other hand, means that one thinks about time as a moment, that is followed by a next moment, that is followed by another moment, etc. (180), just like Van Benthem continually (no pun intended) does in his investigation of the formal structure of time. This conception is not unproblematic; Rudy Rucker reminds us of Zeno's paradox of the arrow, a paradox that arises only because one thinks about time as consisting of moments or points. When we regard a continuous stretch of time as a set of durationless time points (no matter how small they are), then, at any of these points, the arrow is not moving, and as a result the arrow is never moving (1995: 244). Therefore, Van Benthem's representation of time is less suitable as a starting point for a representation of the musical present, for the kind of logic he uses always implies a discrete account of time. The unfolding of sounds, however, is a continuous process.

Luitzen Egbertus Jan Brouwer, on the other hand, takes an approach that has not so much to do with logic, but more with phenomenology. In his dissertation, published in 1907, he avoids giving an account of

time that always implies some form of discreteness. In his dissertation, Brouwer writes that intuition is

> [...] the substratum, divested of all quality, of any perception of change, a unity of continuity and discreteness, a possibility of thinking together several entities, connected by a "between," which is never exhausted by the insertion of new entities. (quoted in Placek 1999: 28)

Brouwer calls this intuition "the intuition of time." According to Brouwer time is the origin of all perception; without time there cannot be any perception whatsoever. Thomasz Placek argues that this intuition of time, which he calls the Brouwerian "form" of passage from one sensation to another, can be identified with continuous time (28). Thus, in this view time is continuous, but experienced through the passage from one (discrete) sensation to another. Time-as-continuous cannot be experienced as such: time can only be grasped as a succession of discrete events. This is compatible with the above elaboration of the musical present and past. The musical present is a continuous presentation of music, a presentation that never stays the same and cannot be retained as such in the present, while in relation to the past the music is interpreted and retained as passing from one (discrete) event to the next.

Brouwer furthermore holds that the experience of the falling apart of moments, which happens over time, causes the intuition of two-oneness, the "basal intuition of mathematics" (1983: 80). According to Brouwer, this intuition creates both the numbers one and two and all finite ordinal numbers, and can eventually create the smallest infinite ordinal number ω. Moreover, he claims time is "[…] the only a priori of mathematics" (quoted in Van Atten, Van Dalen, and Tieszen 2001: 8).[13] Only because time exists one can experience, or intuit, finite and infinite numbers, and even the linear continuum. In other words: in order to be able to intuit the continuum one has to have a notion of time. This does not automatically mean, however, that Brouwer thinks time is also continuous. Remember that the basal intuition of mathematics consists of the falling apart of moments, which can be regarded as a discrete process. Brouwer does not believe discreteness is just some sort of uncompleted state of continuity, but considers them as two irreducible, indefinable and primary notions (Placek 1999: 28). Brouwer argues that in the basal intuition of mathematics,

> […] continuity and discreteness occur as inseparable complements, both having equal rights and being equally clear, it is impossible to avoid one of them as a primitive entity, trying to construe it from the other one, the latter

[13] In Meelberg (2004b) I discuss Brouwer's ideas on mathematics in more detail.

> being put forward as self-sufficient. (quoted in Van Atten, Van Dalen, and Tieszen 2001: 3)

Neither discreteness nor continuity has primacy over the other. One cannot reduce the one to the other. Both continuity and discreteness are irreducible and primary.[14]

This particular characteristic of continuity and discreteness plays a prominent part in Brouwer's conception of time. He distinguishes "internal," intuitive time from "external" time and claims that time is the basic form of the stream of consciousness. Mark van Atten, Dirk van Dalen and Richard Tieszen explain that the intuitive continuum can be understood in connection with internal time and the stream of consciousness (3). The intuitive continuum, however, cannot be understood as a set of durationless points. According to Brouwer, this would be an atomistic, static view of the continuum and would make it disappear (8), and as we have seen other theorists do not favor such a view either. In the experience of the flow of time the human subject is not conscious of any durationless "now" point. When s/he is constructing successors through time, for instance when s/he is experiencing the basal intuition of mathematics, or listening to music, s/he is constructing an idealized grid over the continuum. S/he always does this against the background of the flow of inner time (5). Brouwer underlines this view when he argues that the discrete and the continuous are complementary, for in order to have discreteness of moments in time one has to recognize that there exists something "between" these moments, which implies continuity. On the other hand, the awareness of the movement of time is only possible through the recognition of a past and present moment, which in turn implies discreteness (6). To regard the discrete and the continuous as complementary perhaps comes closest to the way the human brain interprets time, and continua in general, as Rucker remarks when he cites recent psychological experiments, and concludes that "[o]ne could, perhaps, go so far as to say that it is the left brain that counts up pebbles, but it is the right brain that perceives continuous expanses of space" (1995: 243-244). The left-brain constructs successors through time, while the right brain experiences the continuous flow of time.

In order to capture the complementary nature of time Brouwer proposes to replace the element-set relation with a part-whole relation. He states that each subinterval, belonging to a continuum, is of the same nature as its parent interval. The relation of "subinterval," which is a whole-part relation, is the fundamental relation of the continuum. The order relation between disjoint subintervals is the natural order of

[14] Brouwer's view on continuity and discreteness can be compared to the way light is regarded: light is considered to be both a particle and a wave, depending on the context in which light is discussed.

the continuum, abstracted from the progression of time (Van Atten, Van Dalen, and Tieszen 2001: 8-9). In other words: the part is as continuous as the whole, but it is at the same time demarcated. It is a smaller piece of the whole, while retaining the same ontology of that whole, and this act of demarcating time is done against the background of the continuous flow of time.[15] Moreover, the whole cannot be retained as a continuum: one can only grasp the continuous whole by dividing it into parts, by constructing successors through time, which are by definition discrete.[16]

This interpretation of the experience of time is analogous to the account of the musical present and past I gave above. But does Brouwer's account help us in answering the question regarding musical tense? According to Fleischman, tense in narrative establishes a

[15] Although Brouwer drew up his theory at the beginning of the twentieth century, his ideas about the complementary nature of time still hold. More recent studies on the ontology and perception of time, such as Treisman (1999), can be read as a confirmation of Brouwer's ideas.

[16] In his 2002 study, Ulrich Baer criticizes the interpretation of photographs as "frozen moments" which artificially halt the flux of continuous time that, in reality, "[…] carries us forward from event to event in an unstoppable stream" (3). As an alternative to this Heraclitean view on time and history, he advocates a more Democritean conception of the world as occurring in bursts and explosions, a conception which privileges "[…] the moment rather than the story, the event rather than the unfolding, particularity rather than generality" (5). Baer argues that, on the one hand, the Heraclitean conception implies that it is the shutter of the camera that fragments the world. On the other hand, however, this conception ignores the fact that one cannot be certain about the time before and after the moment of the taking of the photograph, while the Heraclitean view does imply a before and after. A more Democritean approach of photographs, Baer concludes, makes it possible "[…] to view each image as potentially disclosing the world – the setting for human experience – as nothing but atoms moving in a void" (5). The Heraclitean view seems to be more compatible with the Brouwerian view on time than the Democritean conception would be. The conception of a Democritean void in which atoms move is incompatible with a non-retainable whole which can be divided into discrete parts, while these parts have the same ontology as the whole. If we were to regard the Democritean void as this Brouwerian whole, this would imply that the atoms that are moving in this void are also empty of content, since part and whole have the same ontology. Rather, Brouwer stresses the artificiality of the division of time, just as taking photographs is an artificial discretization of continuous history in the Heraclitean view. And in this case Baer's criticism regarding this view becomes apparent. For if we take Brouwer's part-whole definition seriously, this would mean that we can no longer regard photographs as an interpretation of history, but only as an actual part of history. The photograph would have to be part of the continuous flow of time, and it would have to have the same ontology as history itself. Ultimately, history-as-retained would be the sum of all photographs taken in history, and nothing more. As a result, we cannot be certain of the time before and after each image, only of the images itself. This leads to an utterly fragmented view on history, one in which no coherence or "grand narrative" can be found, hereby contradicting the Heraclitean view of time and history as a continuous stream. Rather, this fragmented view on history resembles the Democretian conception of the world. Therefore, the Heraclitean conception indeed seems inadequate to account for the relation between photographs and history.

relation between reference time and location time, with reference time being the time of the narrator and location time the time of the events told. And if we follow Brouwer's argument, we have to conclude that musical tense is equal to a part-whole relation. When we combine Fleischman's and Brouwer's accounts, we can conclude that musical tense is supposed to establish a relation between the unfolding of musical sounds, which is the musical present, the whole, and the representation of events, which is the musical past, a collection of parts. The musical present is the whole, the continuous presentation of music, but a whole that cannot be retained. Music-as-retained, i.e. music-made-discursive, i.e. musical experience, is music that is regarded as representing discrete parts, and it is the sum of these representations that constitute the musical past. Hence, musical tense is the possibility music offers to represent retainable parts, i.e. musical events, in a non-retainable whole, which is the continuum of sounds by which the music presents itself.[17]

This account of musical tense may not seem to have much in common with verbal tense as it is normally looked upon. The reason for this is that I have taken as a starting point the special function tense has in narrative, as discussed by Fleischman, instead of a more general account of verbal tense. An important difference between verbal and musical tense is that it is not possible to literally point to a certain element in the music and say: "This is an instance of musical tense," in contrast to tense in verbal narrative. In such narratives, tense is literally represented in the text. Musical tense, on the other hand, is not an element that can be represented directly: it is the establishing of a relation between the unfolding of musical sounds and the representation of events. This implies that musical tense itself cannot be pointed out directly, but only indirectly: the observation that a

[17] A remarkable resemblance with Walter Benjamin's views on history can be noticed here: according to him, the present is not a transition but rather has its origin in time and immediately comes to a standstill, and thus belongs to the past (1974: 704). A true chronicler, Benjamin argues, recounts events without distinguishing between the great and small. Only in this way s/he would account for the truth (694). However, just as Brouwer regards time-as-experienced as a construction, for Benjamin history-as-remembered, and thus historiography, is also a construction that consists of discrete parts. The historical writer, Benjamin remarks, always empathizes with the victor. As a result, history is interpreted as a concatenation of interrelated, discrete, victorious moments. But the Angel of History, Benjamin writes, sees only one single catastrophe, which unceasingly piles rubble on top of rubble and hurls it before its feet, were we see the concatenation of events (696-698). This concatenation implies a continuum, but it is not, as Brouwer teaches us. It is a discrete construction the human subject him/herself constructs in order to make sense out of time and history, in order to be able to survive within the single catastrophe that is history, which at the same time both is one whole and an endless growing collection of rubble, or, in Brouwerian terms: an unretainable whole.

listener can detect retainable parts in a particular musical piece acts as an index for musical tense in that piece.

As a consequence, musical tense is a prerequisite for the possibility of musical narrativity. As I explained in the previous chapter, in a musical narrative three levels can be identified: musical text – story – fabula, a trichotomy that can be equated with the trichotomy "perceptible music" – "musical structure" – "a series of logically and chronologically related musical events that are caused or experienced by musical actors." In other words: in order to talk about a musical narrative, one has to be able to talk about musical events. And since I have defined musical tense as the possibility music offers to represent events, a musical piece without musical tense cannot represent events and thus cannot be narrative. Therefore, I assert that musical tense is necessary for musical narrative, and that its function is pragmatic in nature.

A Past Present in *Rothko Chapel*

Morton Feldman's *Rothko Chapel* (1971), for viola, celesta, percussion, chorus, solo soprano and solo alto, can be considered as a work in which the power of musical tense is put to the test. In Feldman's writings we can read that he wants to destroy the memory, to erase every reference to previous elements, in order to focus the listener's attention on the moment only (Moelants 2003b: 226). In other words: he intends to eliminate musical tense by obstructing the music's possibility of representing retainable parts in the continuum of sounds, constituted by the performance of the composition. As Dirk Moelants observes, in the majority of his compositions Feldman wants to

> present the sounds just as they are, separate from each other; he tries to eliminate the context, the linear structure, as much as possible; the horizontal is being suppressed by the vertical. This creates an uncertainty with regard to the form, an illusion of infinity. The key for this momentary is the slowness with which the elements succeed each other, which is characteristic of Feldman's work.[18]

By letting the musical elements succeed each other at a very slow rate, Feldman intends to destroy the horizontal, i.e. the possibility of linking one element to the next, in favor of a focus on the inherent qualities of

[18] "Feldman wil de klanken op zich laten horen, los van elkaar; hij probeert zoveel mogelijk de context uit te schakelen, de lineaire opbouw; het horizontale wordt verdrongen door het verticale. Dit creëert een onzekerheid over de vorm, een illusie van oneindigheid […] De sleutel voor het momentane ligt echter bij de – voor Feldman zo kenmerkende – traagheid waarmee de elementen elkaar opvolgen." (Moelants 2003a: 7, my translation)

the elements themselves, which is the vertical, or rather the simultaneous. Feldman's musical ideal thus is that the listener cannot combine musical elements into musical events and subsequently into musical phrases.

To attain this ideal, Moelants remarks, Feldman makes use of the way short-term memory works. As I explained in chapter 2, the recognition of musical events by the listener takes place in short-term memory, and this account is similar to Moelants's. He states that short-term memory is the kind of memory in which the human subject immediately organizes sensory data into units, which subsequently can be interpreted. Moelants calls short-term memory a buffer, which constitutes the perceptual present (2003a: 7). In short-term memory sensory data are combined into discrete units, and this is something that can only be done in relation to the musical past, as I argued earlier. However, to name short-term memory the perceptual present implies that the organization of perception, such as the perception of music, into units is also done in the present, and this does not correspond with the above account of musical past and present. Moreover, the perceptual present is a pleonasm, at least when the musical present is concerned. The musical present is the presentation of the flow of sounds; it is that part of music, which presents itself to the listener's ears. Therefore, the musical present always is perceptible.

Moelants furthermore remarks that, when listening to music, the listener can grasp a length of about three seconds. If subsequent sounds are presented within this time frame, then the listener can connect them rhythmically and s/he can recognize melodic and harmonic relations.[19] In order to destroy the horizontal, i.e. the possibility of linking one element to the next, Feldman uses time intervals that transgress this limit of three seconds. In this way, Moelants writes, the listener perceives tones and chords as individual elements. Now, the listener's memory buffer is completely preoccupied with one single event, which s/he subsequently has to analyze in its entirety. The importance of the relations with sounds in its vicinity is minimized. Instead of creating larger connections s/he can only observe the difference between two successive elements:

> Just as Rothko works with space, Feldman works with duration. There is no real rhythm, at least not from the observer's point of view. In this way Feldman uses the limitations of our memory to make us acquainted with the wealth of individual sounds.[20]

[19] In relation to the musical past, of course, and not in the musical present.

[20] "Net zoals Rothko met ruimte werkt, werkt Feldman met duur. Van een echt ritme is nauwelijks sprake, althans niet vanuit het standpunt van de waarnemer. En zo maakt Feldman gebruik van de beperkingen van ons geheugen om ons de rijkdom van de individuele klanken te leren kennen." (Moelants 2003a: 7, my translation)

Like the artist Mark Rothko, Feldman uses the limitations of human perception and memory in order to focus the listener's attention to the characteristics of individual elements. However, Feldman's *Rothko Chapel* is not just an attempt to achieve this goal. In this composition some almost lyrical passages can be heard, which rarely happens in Feldman's music. But the movements of the melodies and rhythms in these passages are frequently superseded by abstract soundscapes, which are timbres with a certain duration, rather than distinct melodies or chords.[21]

Because these soundscapes transgress the limits of short-term memory, in theory they also eliminate the possibility music offers to represent retainable parts in the continuum of sounds by which the music presents itself. The listener cannot bracket events within the continuum, which is the soundscape. The soundscape itself is the only event that is represented, but it cannot be recognized as an event because its duration exceeds the three-second limit of the listener's short-term memory. This means that this musical passage does not know a past tense. The passage is in the present only, since only in relation to the musical past music is regarded as a representation of discrete events. And discreteness is not noticeable in a soundscape such as described above. And thus, at least in theory, these soundscapes give the impression of being static, non-moving, for movement, i.e. going from one (discrete) moment to the next, implies discreteness. Movement in music can only be perceived in relation to the musical past, a past that is absent here.

In *Rothko Chapel*, however, not only static soundscapes are presented. In this piece also more or less conventional melodies can be heard. This means that *Rothko Chapel* is not entirely in the musical present only, which it would be if it would consist of soundscapes that sabotage short-term memory only. In other words: if Feldman, with the aid of abstract soundscapes, would attain his ideal, i.e. if the listener cannot combine musical elements into musical events and phrases, then there would be an alternation of the musical past and present in *Rothko Chapel*; an alternation of melody and soundscape.

With regard to the alternation of past and present in narrative, Fleischman observes the following:

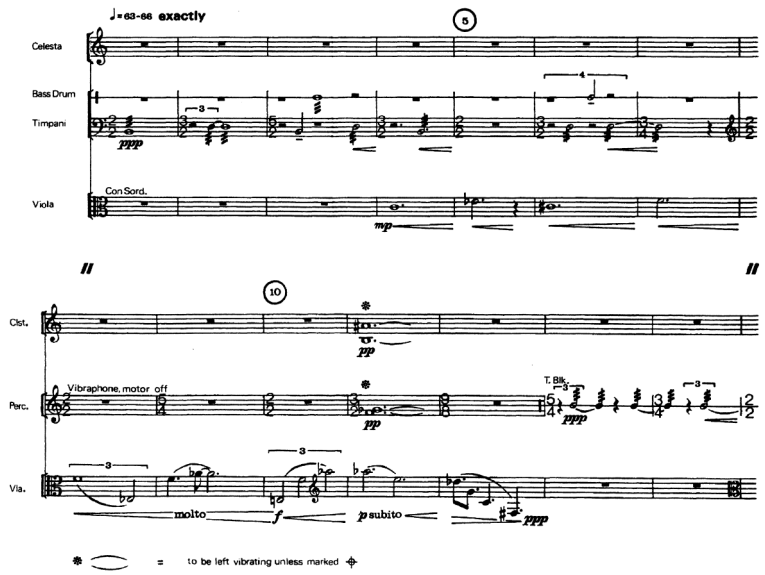
> The ability of the PR [present tense] to interrupt or suspend the narrative event line […] makes possible the suspense that typically accompanies peaks of narrative tension, which are often reported in the PR. The fact that the PR is the unmarked tense of the mimetic rather than the diegetic mode, the tense of actual *speech*, motivates its use to transform narration into

[21] On the other hand, one could argue that the soundscapes are superseded by conventional melodies and rhythms. Melody and rhythm are the anomalies in Feldman's music, not the soundscapes.

> *performance*, thereby emphasizing, above and beyond the information value of a story, its value as a piece of verbal craftsmanship. (60, emphasis in original)

The present tense implies performance, which is consistent with the fact that Fleischman regards the present as reference time, the time of telling. The telling of a story indeed is a performance, namely the uttering of language signs. Fleischman argues that by stressing the fact that a story is told by a narrator, by using the present tense, the attention is drawn to the art, the craftsmanship, of storytelling instead of to the story itself. A remarkable parallel with Feldman's ideal can be observed here: by using the present both in verbal narrative and in music the attention is drawn away from the representation of events in favor of a focus on the means through which such events normally are represented, i.e. the craft of storytelling and the sound itself, respectively. By switching between past and present, *Rothko Chapel* is supposed to focus both on the representation of events and on sound itself. So, let us now investigate whether or not this indeed takes place in this composition.

A soft, distant rumble, caused by the timpani played pianississimo, marks the beginning of *Rothko Chapel*. Then the viola enters, playing a melody that will reappear many times in different variations, such as between 0'44" and 2'22" (as performed by Klangforum Wien and the Südfunk-Chor Stuttgart, directed by Rupert Huber, with Julie Moffat, soprano, and Ulrike Koch, alto, in the recording released by Col Legno WWE 1CD 20506; bars 8-26 in the score), where it is frequently alternated by percussion rolls (ex. 3.1). At 2'26" (bar 27) a faster viola melody sounds together with a chord played in the celesta and the vibraphone. As I already mentioned, the appearance of a melodic line is a rare event in Feldman's music, but a melody that is so explicitly melodic as the one that is played now is even rarer. It is followed by the first appearance of the chorus at 2'35" (bar 29). In this first appearance the chorus sings a homophonic melody, interrupted by the viola playing a three-note melody. Between 3'18" and 4'06" (bars 38-49) again an alternation between viola and percussion can be heard, with celesta chords accompanying the viola.



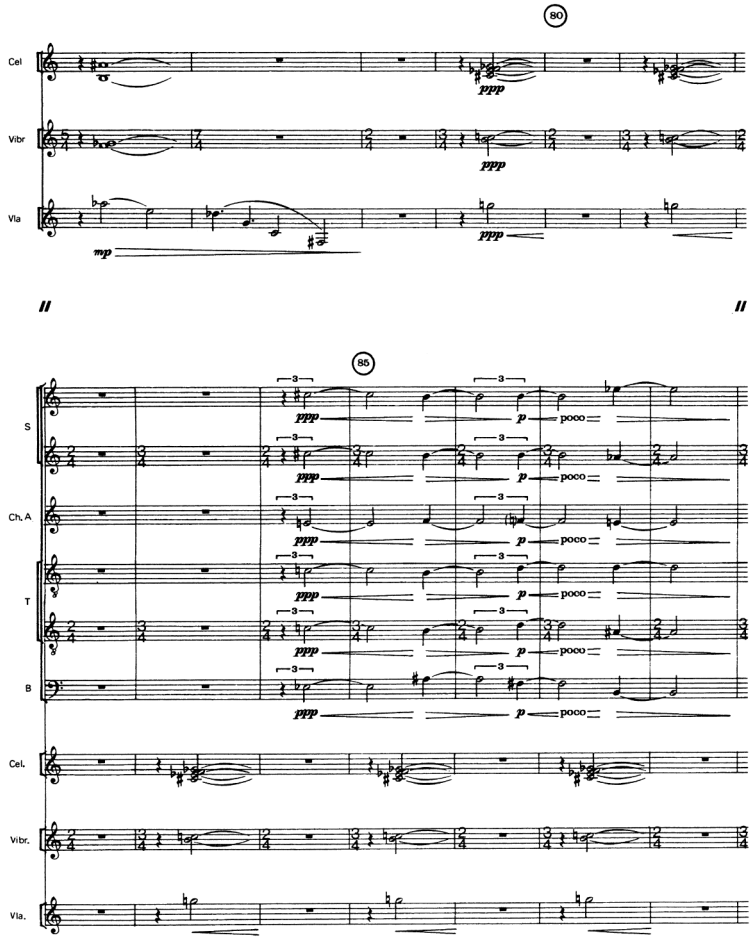
Example 3.1. Morton Feldman, Rothko Chapel, bars 1-14.
Morton Feldman "Rothko Chapel" © 1973 by Universal Edition (London) Ltd., London/UE 15469

Static, soft chords sung by the chorus and accompanied by timpani rolls, alternated by rest, appear between 4'07" and 5'02" (bars 50-62). These chords, however, do not last so long that they function as independent events that are not related to the rest of the piece. Perhaps one could regard these chords as a prelude to the soundscapes that have yet to sound. In bars 58 and 60 the static character of the chorus is interfered with because the chorus sings a crescendo. The viola imitates the static character of the chorus between 5'03" and 5'25" (bars 63-68) by repeatedly playing a B flat flageolet, and in this way extending the prelusive character of this section. Between 5'25" and 5'54" (bars 68-75) the viola continues playing this flageolet, simultaneously with the vibraphone and celesta playing a chord and alternated by rests. At the same time, the chorus sings a homophonic melody which ends at 5'54" (bar 75). Then, a descending two-bar melody is played in the viola, while a chord sounds in the vibraphone and the celesta. One bar of silence, one bar in which a static chord sounds that is played by the viola, vibraphone and celesta, again a bar of silence, the same chord, a bar of silence and again the same chord are presented before the chorus sings a new homophonic melody between 6'24" and 6'54" (bars 84-93). At the same time, the viola, celesta and vibraphone continue playing the same chord, alternated by a bar of rest (ex. 3.2).

Silence again. Chords in the viola, vibraphone and celesta. A descending three-note melody in the vibraphone. Again chords, the vibraphone melody, silence, and finally a crescendo chord in the chorus, out of which a descending viola melody flows. Then a homophonic line in the chorus and the same descending viola melody can be heard, immediately followed by a chord played by the celesta, chimes and viola. Between 8'33" and 9'25" (bars 119-130) an alternation of viola melody and a chord sung by the chorus appears, concluded by a celesta chord and an ascending viola melody. Silence.

The music has arrived at 9'51" (bar 135). Here, a steady rhythm is played by the timpani, consisting of a quarter note rest, a quarter note D, an eight note rest and an eight note B'. This rhythm really functions as a *Zeitgeber*: the individual voices of the chorus sing their own separate parts, with the texture gradually thickening. In their parts a rhythmic pattern can be heard, but it is the rhythm in the timpani that stresses the temporal progression. At 10'30" (bar 148) the viola joins the chorus, while between 11'13" and 11'23" (bars 162-166) a solo alto voice sings long notes. At 11'31" (bar 169) the timpani rhythm stops and two chords are sung by the chorus; the first molto crescendo and the second pianississimo. The viola plays a crescendo solo melody between 11'49" and 12'22" (bars 171-178).

A *ppppp* chord sung by the chorus acts as an introduction for the melody that is sung by the solo soprano between 12'26" and 12'46" (bars 180-184; ex. 3.3). Then the same "*Zeitgeber* rhythm" appears in the timpani, interrupted at 12'59" (bar 189) by the same *ppppp* chord in the chorus. In other words: rhythm and stasis alternate. Next, two bars of timpani, then a celesta chord, followed by a melody in the viola, and finally a timpani roll. The chorus enters, which is now divided into two separate choruses, resulting in a doubling of the number of voices. Until 14'19" (bar 205) movement can be noticed in the chorus, but after the rest in bar 206 a static chord is sung, followed by a note sung by the basses and next by the sopranos. A short pizzicato line in the viola sets the stage for the next event.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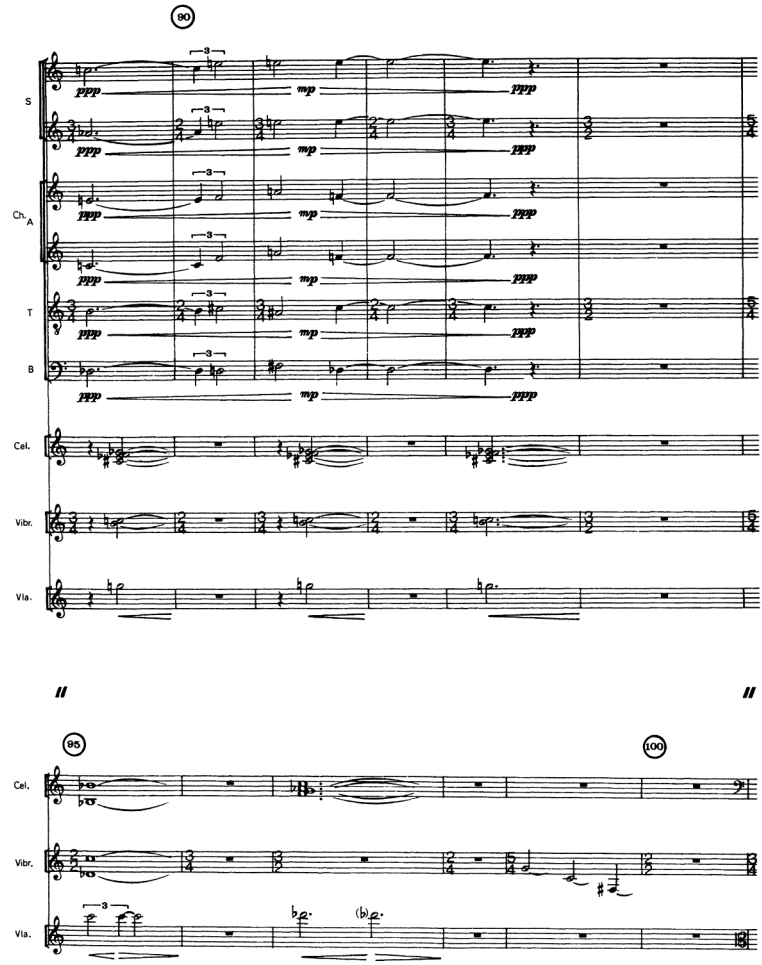
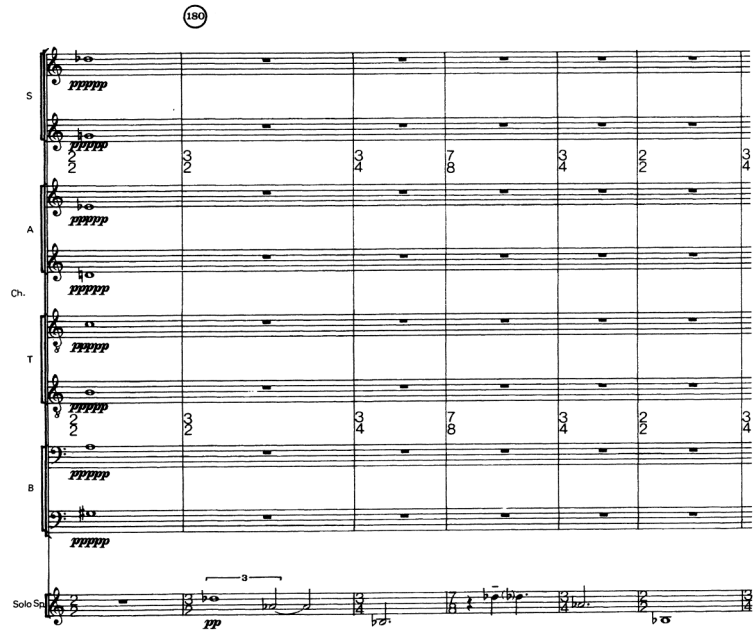


Example 3.2. Morton Feldman, *Rothko Chapel*, bars 76-100.



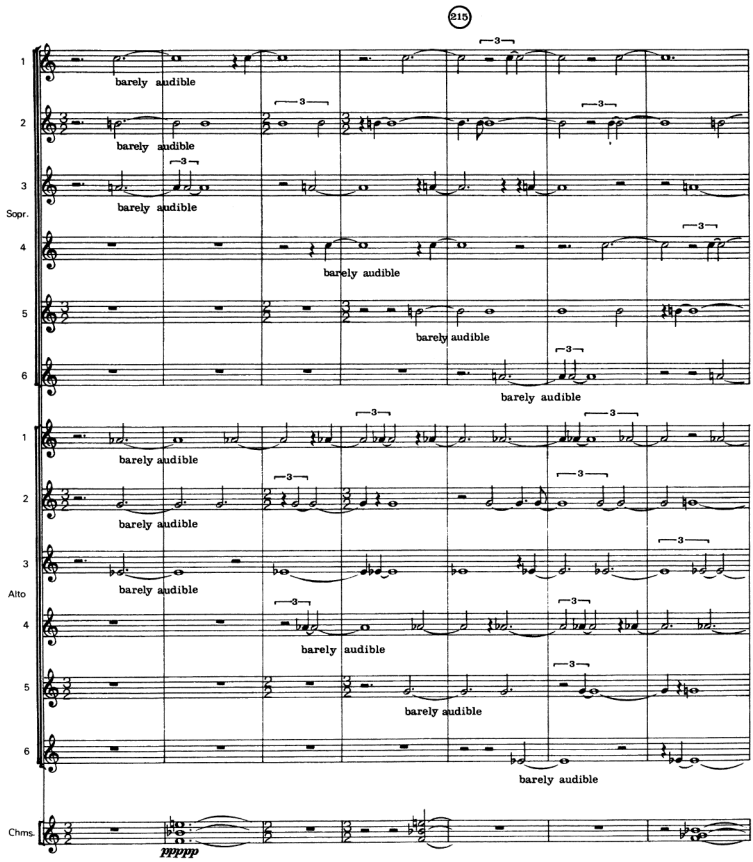
Example 3.3. Morton Feldman, *Rothko Chapel*, bars 179-184.
Morton Feldman "Rothko Chapel" © 1973 by Universal Edition (London) Ltd., London/UE 15469

This event can be regarded as the climax of the piece. The event starts at 14'51" (bar 211) and ends at 18'12" (bar 242). One chord is sung by the chorus, and because the voices in the two choruses alternate the chord can be sustained the full 32 bars. During this event, a new *Zeitgeber* appears: different chords played by the chimes in a steady, even rhythm. Were it not for the chimes, a feeling of timelessness could really be felt.[22] At this point in the composition the chorus represents, for an extended period of time, an abstract soundscape, a harmony that is not so much harmony but rather a timbre, a color (ex. 3.4).

Between 18'12" and 22'23" (bars 243-301) an alternation between a viola melody and a soprano melody, alternated with sporadic timpani rolls, can be heard, creating a contrast with the preceding, static event. Only at 22'05" (bar 298) there is a reference to the static character evoked by the chorus, for here the bass voices sing a whole note B flat.

[22] On the other hand, one could argue that it is because of the chimes, this *Zeitgeber*, the listener can feel what it means to experience timelessness. Here, stasis and movement are juxtaposed, in order to make the listener aware of the difference between the two.

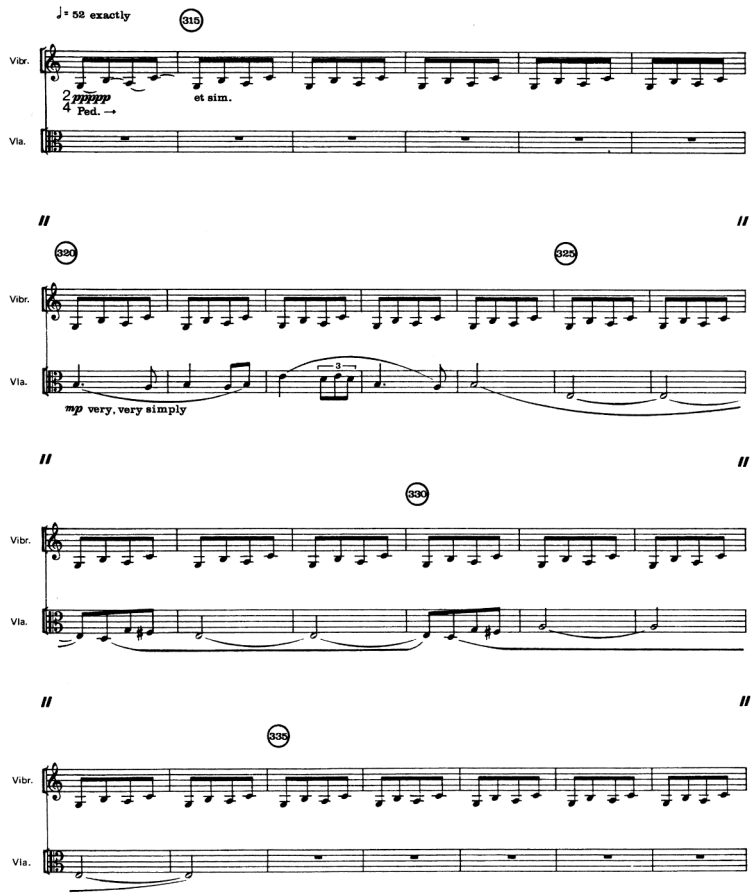
Between 22'24" and 22'37" (bars 302-304) again a static chord is sung by the chorus, followed by a celesta chord. Next, again a chord sung by the chorus, but now both crescendo and decrescendo. The chorus concludes by singing a static chord between 23'06" and 23'12" (bars 312-313).



Example 3.4. Morton Feldman, *Rothko Chapel*, bars 211-217.
Morton Feldman "Rothko Chapel" © 1973 by Universal Edition (London) Ltd., London/UE 15469

A next static sound is created in a new way at 23'13" (bar 314): the vibraphone plays a continuing, repetitive eight-note pattern in which no motion can be felt. The individual notes of the pattern are not perceived as such; the pattern as a whole resembles a timbre rather than a motif, because of the tones sustaining and running into one another. At 23'19" (bar 320) a new, lyrical melody is played by the

viola, two times in total, the second time transposed up a perfect fourth (ex. 3.5). This melody has a folksong-like quality and is almost an anomaly within the context of the piece. Next, at 24'10" (bar 360) the motif in the vibraphone continues and is doubled in the celesta, while the chorus first sings a static chord, then a crescendo and decrescendo chord and finally again a static one between 24'36" and 24'38" (bars 370-371). Bars 314-359 are repeated, followed by a variation of bars 360-371: the vibraphone is no longer doubled by the celesta, the length of the chords in the chorus differs and these chords are sung more dynamically. While the vibraphone stops, a decrescendo chord is sung in the chorus, which marks the ending of the piece.



Example 3.5. Morton Feldman, *Rothko Chapel*, bars 314-339.
Morton Feldman "Rothko Chapel" © 1973 by Universal Edition (London) Ltd., London/UE 15469

Rothko Chapel never really switches between past and present, because there is never a completely static, abstract soundscape to be heard that both lasts so long that the listener cannot connect it to the rest of the music and is not interfered with in some way or another. This is surprising, since many of the static chords that are played and/or sung last longer than three seconds. But then again, Moelants is the first to admit that the three-second limit of human short-term memory is somewhat theoretical:

> When we take a look at the writings of Feldman himself, we find that he wants to destroy the memory, to erase every reference to previous elements, in order to concentrate on the listener's attention on the moment. This philosophy would suggest a choice for intervals over three seconds. On the other hand, we can never really destroy the content, we never really hear a sound within a composition just as we hear it out of the composition. (2003b: 226)

As Moelants argues, the listener perceives and experiences sounds within the context of a composition. This means that, in experiencing these sounds, not only short-term memory is at work, but also long-term memory, as I explained in the previous chapter. In long-term memory schemas reside which are organized sets of memories about sequences of, among other events, musical events. It is here where the listener has stored his/her musical knowledge – in the form of schemas – with which s/he interprets musical sounds. It is also the place where the listener stores the marked events s/he encounters in a musical piece. Thus, it is because s/he has long-term memory that the listener can listen to music within a context. And since long-term memory is not susceptible to a three-second limit, the context in which an abstract soundscape sounds is never eliminated. A soundscape, no matter how long it lasts and how static it might be, can never be perceived as an isolated sound, but will always be related to the composition as a whole because the musical context is always present in – literally – the back of the listener's mind.

For this analysis of *Rothko Chapel* it is irrelevant whether or not Feldman himself knew that a pure isolated presentation of sounds within the context of a musical composition is impossible. But it is remarkable that he, at least in this piece, never seems to really try to achieve this. All, but one, static moments that in theory could be qualified for acting as an abstract soundscape either do not last long enough or are accompanied by other sounds that are not static, but dynamic. The only moment in the piece where the feeling of stasis has a substantial length is in bars 211-242. But here the chimes chime in and destroy the purely static character by playing a steady rhythm.

Hence, nowhere in *Rothko Chapel* can a true switching from the past to the present tense be found.

However, this is not the whole story I want to tell about this piece. For although Feldman's ideal of the listener concentrating on the individual sound only is not realized, a clear distinction between the more melodic and the more static phrases can be noticed. Because the music alternates between melodic and more static moments the listener is able to find out what the difference is between movement and stasis, without the music itself actually switching between movement and absolute stasis, so between the past and the present. Only a feeling of stasis, of the present, is evoked within a moving context, which I termed the past. In other words: in *Rothko Chapel* the musical present – absolute stasis – is represented as an effect of the musical past. Because stasis is represented within a moving context, the listener is made aware of what it is to experience stasis.

The Marking of Time

In the above analysis I did not discuss whether *Rothko Chapel* is narrative. The part from bar 1 until bar 313 can be considered as representing a temporal development, with a temporal suspension of this development in bars 211-242. Yet, from bar 314 onward a completely different section begins, that has almost nothing to do with the preceding section. Moreover, this last section cannot be regarded as the representation of a proper development. As a result, the composition can be regarded as narrative until bar 313 only, while bars 314-427 act as some kind of non-narrative epilogue.

This narrative with a non-narrative ending demonstrates that as soon as some phenomenon is represented in music, it is represented in the musical past. And this corresponds with the pragmatic function of musical tense. As I mentioned earlier in this chapter, in verbal texts, the pragmatic function of tense serves to establish relations between: parts of texts, the text in which these parts occur, the text as a whole and the situation in which this text is related. I have already explained one such relation musical tense establishes: the relation between the musical text as a continuous whole and discrete musical events, i.e. the relation between the musical present and the musical past. This relation, Burrows argues, is constitutive of the true nature of musical narrative:

> Music has the character of a proto-narrative, a narrative without things in it, and so without the places they are in, without characters and so, except by sometimes strained attribution, without genders, personalities, life histories – narrative without words, except as they are smuggled in along with titles and song texts. Concentrating on sound involves a turning away from the

> range of the world we interpret as stable and locatable, and a turning toward pure movement and time. (1997: 533)

The concentration on sound involves focusing on movement and time. And this necessitates a focus on musical tense. The concentration on sound is only in part equal to the act of listening: this concentration also is an act of interpretation. The perception of movement is the perception of the passing from one event to another, for in a continuum movement cannot be noticed. Therefore, movement in music can only be perceived in relation to the musical past, when music is regarded as a representation of (discrete) events, and to regard of music as a representation of events implies more than just listening to sound; it is a listening experience, the making discursive of what the listener hears. And as soon as this step is taken the music can still be regarded as a "narrative without words," but not as a "narrative without things in it." From that moment onward the music metaphorically "contains" representations of events, which can subsequently be interpreted, say, as being musical characters, as being placed in a musical space, and as being part of a musical story, as I explained in chapter 2. Hence, a musical narrative may not be a narrative "with things in it," as Burrows writes (but neither are verbal narratives); it is nevertheless a narrative which can represent things, just like a verbal story. But it all starts with the concentration on movement and time, which is the beginning of all listening experiences.

It is because of musical tense that music can be regarded as being organized, as Andreas Luckner's remark in regard to meter and rhythm suggests:

> Just as a running meter by itself is mechanical and rigid, the spontaneous activity or pure energy of random accents do not constitute a form; in this case these cannot even be regarded as proper accents. Only in the moving order of rhythm, which is nothing but the coordination of these two movements, meter and accents constitute a vivid unity.[23]

Meter, which in itself is not audible or represented in music, is the organizing principle by which the musical events can be ordered. Meter is what Brouwer would call the idealized grid over the temporal continuum that the listener constructs while listening to the flow of musical sounds. It is the marking off of time; it is the temporal

[23] "Wie das durchlaufende Metrum fur sich genommen mechanisch und starr ist, so bilden andererseits die einer spontanen Aktivität oder puren Energie entspringenden willkürlichen Akzente für sich genommen keine Gestalt, ja im Grunde verböte sich hier die Redeweise von 'Akzenten'. Erst in der beweglichen Ordnung des Rhythmus, der nichts anderes als die Koordinierung dieser beiden Bewegungen darstellt, bilden Metrum und Akzente eine lebendige Einheit." (Luckner 2000: 132, my translation)

reference to which musical events are related. And again, this comparison can only be made on the basis of a musical past.[24]

Because the rhythm of musical events does not equal the pulse of meter these events stand out in the music. This phenomenon is an example of markedness, which Fleischman defines as the situation in which, in case of an opposition, one member of the opposition feels more normal, unmarked, than the other(s), which are therefore marked (1990: 52). In the case of rhythm meter is the unmarked term, whereas the musical event that stands out rhythmically in the music is the marked term. In her theory Fleischman applies the concept of markedness as follows:

> The theory of tense in narrative elaborated [here] is founded on the proposition that the PFV P [perfective past] (= PRET) [preterit] is the (pragmatically) unmarked tense of narrative language […] One of the principle claims [in Fleischman's theory] is that when in a narrative the PR [present] – or any other tense than the PRET is chosen, the narrator's objective (often unconscious) is to neutralize one or more of the properties that collectively define PRET as the unmarked tense of narration and in turn define the norms for narrative discourse. (55)

In storytelling the past tense is unmarked; the use of this tense is characteristic of narrative, and Fleischman contends that any deviation of this tense in narrative is therefore marked, for it is in opposition with the norms for narrative discourse and hence stands out.

Markedness is a concept that is applied in musicology, too, and most notably by Robert S. Hatten. In his theory of musical markedness he proposes "[…] the grounding of musical relationships in the cultural universes of their conception, in order to address the expressive significance of formal structures in a richer way" (1994: 66). Hatten intends to study musical relations within their proper musical context and to investigate in what manner these relations stand out or not in this context. He argues that a musical event becomes meaningful because it is related to other musical events within a context in such a way that this event is the marked term. And since Hatten contends that "[…] the marked entity of an opposition has a narrower range of meaning with respect to the unmarked one" (63), he regards such an event as being more meaningful than the unmarked terms.

Burrows's view on the relation between markedness and meaning seems, at least in part, to be incompatible with Hatten's:

> A patterned interaction between a participant and the flow of sounding tones unfolds in each particular performance, and the experience of a listener

[24] The process of meter-finding in music by the listener is elaborated in Temperley (2001).

> grows up around the process of matching the hypothesis to the flow of tones. Meaning emerges from the match between hypothesis and tones. Carried past a certain point, an imperfect match destroys meaning. However, up to that point it has the effect of raising the intensity of the experience. In musical terms, an unanticipated modulation would serve as an example. (1997: 537)

Burrows argues that meaning equals the affirmation of expectation. As soon as the listener's expectation is not sufficiently met meaning has vanished. According to him, moderate deviation from this expectation is not devastating for the emergence of meaning, but as soon as the music deviates too much it no longer has any meaning. This implies that only a moderately marked term can be meaningful. But how moderately must a term be marked to still be meaningful? Burrows seems to suggest that music always has to conform to the stylistic conventions appropriate to this composition in order to convey meaning. This view might be too restrictive, for Hatten remarks:

> The interpretation of a work leads to an appropriate level of complexity through the strategic interpretation of new categories (*types*) and their unique instances (*tokens*). Markedness plays a role in the *interpretation* of a work's strategies beyond the encoded oppositions of style, as well. This strategic markedness, however, may or may not survive in the style, but certainly exists in the "systems" (thematic and other) the work creates for itself. (1994: 65, emphasis in original)

Hatten admits that the interpretation of an individual work, the token, is done while referring to a certain style, the type, but he also allows for marked events to transgress this particular style. As he points out: "[W]hile style constrains expectancies, it must also provide room for unique strategies of realization" (11). These unique strategies subsequently may be assimilated in the style, and in this sense contribute to the growth of this style.[25] Style types guide the interpretational strategies applied to individual works, the tokens. With style types, the listener seeks correlations between the individual work and the style the listener feels it is compatible with. Interpretations of individual works create cultural units that can be added to the style types (30). Nevertheless, every singular composition must be allowed to contain idiosyncratic characteristics, without correlating to any style type. To conclude: a musical piece can still be structured, and thus convey meaning (for the recognition of marked and unmarked events, which forms the basis of meaning, is the result of musical structuring), even if stylistic boundaries are transgressed. Only when it is impossible

[25] Note the similarities with Kunst's UNLL-process I described in chapter 1, as well as with the process of the forming of new schemata in long-term memory that I discussed in the previous chapter.

to structure music, i.e. when music is ungraspable, it is literally meaningless. Consequently, musical events can be marked to a great extent and at the same time be meaningful.

A typical example of a marked term in music is the musical theme. At least in traditional tonal music, a musical theme often is the element around which a composition is constructed; it is the nucleus of a musical idea. The theme has to stand out in the music; it has to be recognizable as a theme. Therefore, Hatten concludes, it has to be marked:

> Any consistent use (repetition, variation, development, return) of a musical idea helps to define its thematic status as a subject of discourse. But the significance of an idea emerges to some degree from foregrounding […] Thus, that which is thematic in a work is by definition strategically marked, above and beyond whatever stylistic markedness (or unmarkedness) its constituents may posses. (112-113)

When a musical idea stands out in the music, which means that it is foregrounded, it is marked. It is in part, the way this idea is used that foregrounds and converts it into a theme, apart from the inherent shape of the idea itself. Still, Hatten remarks, "[…] a theme [that] is intentionally constructed to be stylistically unmarked, also occurs" (126, 128). He does not really elaborate this notion, but it seems to me that this theme still is marked, albeit within a different context. Such a theme might not be a marked term within the musical piece itself, in that it does not stand out compared to the other musical events. As a musical theme, however, it does stand out when compared to other musical themes. The normal state of musical themes is that they are marked. Therefore, the unmarked state for themes is, that they stand out, in relation to other musical events. But now we have a theme that does not stand out within a composition, which is an abnormal state for a theme. Therefore, in relation to the conventional notions regarding themes this theme is marked.

Fleischman points out that a marked term does not have to remain marked permanently. By pragmatically unmarking a marked term, this term "[…] loses its distinctiveness (its mark) in a particular context through frequency of use" (1990: 54). Hatten gives an example of this, by referring to the case of a repeated occurrence of a Picardy third in a cadence: "In this case the Picardy third is still marked with respect to any earlier minor triads, but the composer has created a new environment where it is possible for another chord to be used in place of the Picardy third" (1994: 42-43). Because the Picardy third occurs so frequently here it no longer stands out in the music, it has become an unmarked term, whereas it originally was marked. As a consequence, when after the repeated occurrence of the Picardy third

another chord sounds, that chord becomes marked: it has taken over the function that the Picardy third originally had.

The fluctuation from markedness to unmarkedness and vice versa is an important element in music, not only in tonal music, but also in atonal music. Dack, in referring to studies done by Giomi and Ligabue, points out that in this kind of music markedness functions in a similar fashion:

> Smallest units of signification are identified […] These units can be subsequently listed in paradigms demonstrating criteria of equivalence. Chains of units and, it is hoped, meaning might then begin to emerge. Generally, the process is continued until the materials are exhausted, new units are chosen and the entire process repeated. Thus, by means of the immanent structures of the work its message can be described and understood even if the code is unknown – hardly an uncommon situation in contemporary music. (1999: 1)

These smallest units of signification can only be identified because these stand out in the music: they are marked. However, since many contemporary musical compositions, especially atonal ones, do not make use of standardized musical conventions, such as functional harmony, or correlate to style types, paradigms have to be created anew for every piece. This is done by comparing marked and unmarked terms, which in the case of contemporary, post-tonal music comes down to observing which sounds stand out in relation to other sounds within the composition. Next, these terms can be combined into larger events, thereby creating larger (sub)contexts in which new markedness relations can emerge. Hatten calls the clustering of terms in order to create larger (marked) entities markedness assimilation (1994: 64).[26]

Properly speaking, the identification of marked terms and markedness assimilation is identical to the process of recognizing musical events and musical phrases I described in chapter 2. Closures are marked terms, and because closures mark off musical events these events are marked as well. Musical events can themselves be grouped into larger entities, i.e. musical events can be clustered into larger musical phrases, which is an act of markedness assimilation. Within these phrases an event *a* may be unmarked relative to a different event *b* in that same phrase, whereas event *a* was marked when related to the musical piece as a whole, or vice versa. In other words: markedness and markedness assimilation is the organization of a text (in this case a musical composition) and the attribution of meaning to the events in this text as a result of this event being marked, while the meaning of an

[26] Markedness assimilation may in turn lead to a new, added schema that resides in long-term memory.

event depends on the subcontext within that text to which the event is related, since in these contexts markedness relations can differ.

This process is in line with the pragmatic function of tense as Fleischman envisages it in relation to markedness: "[A]ny context or subcontext may set up its own norms [regarding markedness relations] in contrast to those of the larger context" (1999: 55). Tense acts as a metalinguistic signal of narrative genres. This means that adult speakers appear to possess a typology of narrative forms as part of their linguistic competence, and there "[…] appear to be grammatical features […] that correlate predictably with these narrative primes" (123). But a narrative may deviate from this typology. Markedness relations may be changed within a narrative, creating a subcontext which, as a whole, stands out in the text, but in which other types of markedness relations prevail compared to the text as a whole. It is the pragmatic function of tense that makes possible these subdivisions and the relations between subdivisions and the text. Likewise, it is because of musical tense that musical events and phrases can be recognized in a musical piece. Musical tense is the music's possibility of representing events, while the higher-order organization of music, i.e. the organizing of events into musical phrases, also only can be done in relation to the musical past. After all, musical phrases, too, are discrete parts that belong to a continuous whole which is the musical present. Moreover, markedness also is dependent on musical tense, since comparing can only be done in relation to the musical past and markedness is the outcome of a comparison. As a result, musical tense makes possible the organizing of music, and therefore indeed complies with the pragmatic function of tense. Moreover, it is because of musical tense that music can be meaningful, since musical meaning depends on markedness.

The Narrator's Presence as Narrative's Present

Musical representation always implies a musical past. Even if one were to represent the musical present this representation has to take place in the musical past, as *Rothko Chapel* teaches us. While the presentation of a succession of sounds, which together constitute a musical piece, takes place in the present, in the past music is the representation of musical events. In relation to this phenomenon Fleischman remarks:

> [T]he resolution of [the paradox of narrative temporality, which arises because, within an inherently retrospective discourse, the movement of narrative time is prospective] is to be sought in the process of "narrativization" – a configurational operation whereby the unordered data of an experience are converted into structures of language, for it is only in telling the tale that we retrace forward what we have already traced backward. (1990: 167)

Fleischman thinks of the representation of a present and a future in the past as a paradox, a paradox that is resolved by involving the process of narrativization. Fleischman defines this concept in about the same manner as Fludernik does (see chapter 1): narrativization is a structuring activity in which a subject interprets an object as a narrative.[27] The process of narrativization is in many respects similar to the way the listener identifies representations of discrete musical events in the continuous stream of sounds, in that unordered sensory data are structured into discrete units. A difference between my account of the musical present and past and Fleischman's definition of narrativization, however, is that she seems to suggest that in narrating a tale the structuring takes place. In other words: events are already structured when the narrator relates a story. In my account, on the other hand, the unfolding of the continuous stream of sounds – the musical present – equals the musical storytelling, whereas the structuring of events is done by the listener in relation to the musical past. Hence, it is not in the musical telling that past events are retraced forward, but in the listening.

This difference has consequences for the distinction in musical narrative between what Fleischman calls speaker-now and story-now. Speaker-now refers to the time of the telling of the story, whereas story-now refers to the time during which the events of the story are assumed to have taken place (125). At first sight it seems that speaker-now equals reference time and story-now equals location time. After all, reference time is the time of the narrator and location time the time of the events told. Indeed, the time of the telling of the story can be equated with the time of the narrator. By defining story-now as the time during which the events of the story are assumed to have taken place, however, an important shift has been made. "The time of the events told" can be considered as the time in which musical sounds are part of the representation of musical events. But is this also the time during which the events of the story are assumed to have taken place? I have argued that in the musical past, which is location time, music is the representation of discrete events. This does not imply, however, that these events also actually take place in this past. The structuring of music into events is not the same as the taking place of events. Everything that is going on within an event happens in the musical present, for it is in the present that musical sounds present themselves. As I argued earlier in this chapter, between the continuous flow of sounds and discrete musical events a part-whole relation exists. This means that an event whose representation starts at moment $t = x$ and

[27] However, as I also remarked in chapter 1, not just every object can be narrativized; an object has to have narrative potentialities that invites the subject to interpret this object as a narrative.

stops at $t = y$ consists of the same sounds as the whole continuum of sounds during the time span between $t = x$ and $t = y$. As a result, everything that happens within an event has already happened in the present. And this would imply that speaker-now is the same as story-now.

This equalization occurs as a result of the difference between my account and Fleischman's with regard to the structuring of events. As I already mentioned, Fleischman argues that events are structured while telling a tale. In my account of musical narrativity, however, events are structured while listening to the musical tale, and thus after the telling, which results in the equalization of the time of telling and the time in which the events are happening. The discrete events are not recognized as such until after the fact, but the sounds out of which the events consist have already been presented by then. Hence, the distinction between speaker-now and story-now is not very useful when talking about musical narrative.[28]

Perhaps the impossibility of distinguishing between speaker-now and story-now in music is one of the reasons why Abbate persists in the impossibility of musical narrativity. She claims that music cannot represent a past tense. Possibly, in claiming this, she is thinking of something like speaker-now and story-now, with the latter being the past. And in that sense music indeed cannot represent a past tense. However, earlier in this chapter I have shown that music can represent such a tense, albeit with the musical past being location time rather than story-now.

A different argument against musical narrativity mentioned by Abbate is that musical works have no ability to posit a "narrating survivor" of the tale who speaks of it in the past tense. At the beginning of this chapter I already pointed out that, with the term "narrating survivor," Abbate seems to exclude the possibility of an external narrator. She only seems to acknowledge a character-bound narrator, and in so doing she also rules out other types of narrators that Fleischman mentions. Fleischman distinguishes between four kinds of so-called narrative perspectives, each being characterized by the way tense is used. Actually, by using the term "narrative perspective," Fleischman is conflating the functions of narrator and of focalizor. This is problematic, since in this case there is no distinction between the one who speaks and the one who perceives. Below, I will discuss the consequences of this conflation in more detail. For this moment, I prefer to use the term "narrative position," rather than "narrative perspective," in order to avoid this conflation.

[28] Instead, the distinction between speaker-now – the time of utterance – and listener-now – the time of interpretation – would make more sense.

The first position Fleischman mentions is the narrator that speaks in the unmarked preterit, and thus adopts the position of the historian. When the imperfect tense is used, the events are told from the position of the painter, who depicts rather than narrates (63). These can be regarded as external narrators, and therefore as narrators that are not recognized as such by Abbate. Only the narrator that, in Fleischman's words, views events from the position of a memorialist, is a true teller of a tale according to Abbate. For in this position, Fleischman explains, explicit reference is made to personal experience. This position is taken when the narrator speaks in the compound past (63).

The last position Fleischman recognizes is the position of a performer. This position is also incompatible with Abbate's account. In this position the present is used, i.e.

> […] the tense conventionally used for mimetic discourse (actual speech and its direct representation), [which] enables narrators to remain within the diegetic mode but at the same time to "represent" (rather than "narrate") what they purport to observe, and to "perform" the report of it. (63)

At first sight, the position of the performer is the narrative position that is adopted in the case of musical narrativity. The time of the musical narrator is indeed the present, and a musical narrative can be regarded as a representation. However, when we look more closely at the description of the position of the performer Fleischman gives, it actually resembles the definition I gave of the musical focalizor, i.e. the performance of a musical work, rather than the definition of the musical narrator. This is not that surprising, since "perspective," the term Fleischman uses, is more or less synonymous with "focalization," as I mentioned above. In her following remark Fleischman indeed acknowledges that she is characterizing different kinds of narrators by the respective focalizations they embody:

> [T]he narrating personae I have referred to as the historian, memorialist, painter, and performer are essentially *alternate focalizations of the narrator*, distinguished not so much along a scale of epistemic access to the mental states of story participants or to situations that cannot normally be observed as along a scale of subjective involvement with these situations and participants, yielding the different modes of reporting I have referred to respectively as diegetic, memorial, pictorial, and mimetic. (220, emphasis in original)

Furthermore, she argues that the use of tense alternations can signify shifts involving the focalizor, and more specifically the focalization of the narrator (255). However, if she defines the different kinds of narrators by the perspectives they take, she deviates from the definition of the narrator and the focalizor, as I explained earlier. There has to be

a theoretical distinction between those who perceive and those who speak, so between the (metaphorical) perception through which the elements are presented and the identity of the voice that is verbalizing that perception. But Fleischman seems to do the exact opposite: the identity of the verbalizing voice is determined by the metaphorical vision through which the elements of a story are presented.

Fleischman's definition of the different narrative perspectives thus can be read as definitions of different focalizations, but with an important exception. In the above quotation she claims that the focalizations of the narrator she mentions (the historian, memorialist, painter, and performer) do not refer so much to the mental states of story participants, but rather to the degree of involvement of the narrator within the story. This is a restriction compared to Bal's conception of focalizor, in which a story can also be focalized through the mental states of story participants. Hence, narrative perspective is not identical with character-bound focalization.

But regardless of the fact that Fleischman's narrative perspectives are kinds of focalizations rather than kinds of narrators, the perspectives of the historian, the painter, and the performer remain incompatible with Abbate's account. These perspectives do not conform to the notion of narrator as "narrating survivor," and are therefore no true narrators according to Abbate. Nevertheless, it cannot be denied that such perspectives actually can be found in narratives, just as external narrators can be found. As a consequence, the restriction of "narrator" to "narrating survivor" is problematic to begin with, for it rules out many other types of narrators through which a story can be related.

Abbate apparently holds on to a set of very strict norms with which she defines a narrative. In fact, they are so strict that they exclude many texts that are regarded as narratives according to Bal's theory. Fleischman, on the other hand, lists a set of narrative norms that are less strict. She holds that narratives have to refer to specific experiences that occurred in some past world (real or imagined) and are accordingly reported in a tense of the past. Narratives also have to contain both sequentially ordered events and nonsequential collateral material, but it is the events that define narration. Furthermore, the default order of the events in a narration has to be iconic to the chronology of events in the fabula. Lastly, Fleischman states that narratives have to be "[…] informed by a point of view that assigns meanings to their contents in conformity with a governing ideology, normally that of the narrator" (263).

With the exception of the fourth norm, all norms are about the temporal dimension of narrative. The fourth norm is, at least, a partial confirmation of Bal's claim that a narrative always is focalized. Again, Fleischman assigns focalization primarily to the narrator, but this time

she adds the adverb "normally," as if to say that focalization can be more than just the narrator's perspective. Regrettably, she does not elaborate the notion "governing ideology" here, but she probably refers to the ideology that belongs to the focalizor.

In the other norms Fleischman states that narrative reports about past events, which have been ordered in a certain way, while the temporal order of the events in the fabula represents the default order of the events on the story level. This view is in accordance with Bal's theory, although in her theory it is not explicitly stated that a narrative has to be a report about past, instead of present or future, events. However, it is necessary to look closer at this norm in order to be able to answer the third question I posed at the beginning of this chapter: Is representing a past tense a necessary condition for narrativity? The first two questions have already been answered: yes, we can speak of a past tense in music, and no, narrating in the most basic literary sense does not necessarily imply the positing of a narrating survivor who necessarily speaks of the narrative in the past tense. On the contrary, the term "narrating survivor" is problematic to begin with. The third question, on the other hand, has not yet been explicitly addressed.

As I just remarked, Bal's theory does not list as a characteristic of narrative that it has to refer to specific events that occurred in some past world and are accordingly reported in a tense of the past. The way she discusses events in the fabula and how the order of the events can be altered in the story level, which make phenomena such as analepsis and prolepsis possible, does imply, albeit very indirectly, that a narrative can be about past events. But this does not imply that it therefore also is a necessary condition for narrativity to represent a past tense. As we have seen Fleischman herself acknowledges that a narrator can employ different kinds of tenses in order to relate a story, and thus can assume different narrative positions. Moreover, there are narratives that are completely written in the future tense, but at the same time are fully narrative, such as the prophecy of the Apocalypse. But even if representing a past tense were a necessary condition for narrativity, a musical narrative would comply with it. For as I argued throughout this chapter, and have shown in my analysis of *Rothko Chapel*, it is possible to speak of a past tense in music; it is that moment in which musical sounds are regarded as belonging to a musical event.

The musical past is location time, the time of the events told. It is the time in which the music is regarded as consisting of musical events. The musical present, on the other hand, is reference time, the time of the narrator. It is the moment in which music presents itself as a continuous stream of sounds. By using the expressions "told" and "narrator" here, I imply that the musical past and present are crucial in musical narrativity. Musical tense, i.e. the possibility music offers to

establish a relation between reference time and location time, is a necessary condition for music in order to be narrative. As a result, reference time and location time, i.e. the musical present and past, are necessarily attributed to music that is narrative, too.[29]

The Shape of Things to Come

Although the above list suggests that this set of narrative norms is absolute, Fleischman stresses the possibility of deviating from these norms. In fact, by making exceptions of the norms one is in fact illuminating these norms, Fleischman remarks, and therefore exceptions regarding tense in narratives are always possible (263). As an example she – again – mentions the use of the present tense in narrative, which operates metalinguistically to make a statement against the narrative prototype. Fleischman states that "[…] just as certain linguistic protocols and categories of grammar have been shown to be instrumental to the process of narrativization, others are instrumental in denarrativization – in producing storytelling 'against the grain'" (264). Now, if a musical piece were to present itself in the present without evoking a musical past, then it would be considered as a truly denarrativized work. And although composers such as Feldman try to write against the grain in order to create denarrativized music in this fashion, the analysis of *Rothko Chapel* has shown that it is very hard to attain this ideal. But this analysis has also shown that it is possible to make the listener aware of what it is to experience stasis – which is sufficient to constitute a denarrativized musical environment – albeit within a moving, and thus potentially narrative, musical context.[30] In other words: a composer might be able to represent, within a musical piece that itself can be narrative, a denarrativized context.[31]

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[29] Yet, I do not claim that one can only distinguish between a musical past and present when it concerns narrative music. Musical past and present depend on musical tense, and musical tense is not exclusive to musical narrativity.

[30] I do not want to imply that it is simply not possible to create music that is not narrative. I only want to point out that it is very difficult to compose music without evoking a musical past.

[31] In his analysis of Frédéric Chopin's Prelude in Bb major, op. 28, no. 21 (1838), De Groot argues that in this piece there is a fragment that can be considered as being denarrativized, as a result of the static character of this fragment compared to the dynamic character of rest of the piece. Given the static character of this fragment, De Groot concludes, it is "[…] strongly contrasting with the dynamic original context, one could speak here of 'denarrativization.' As if from a desire to protect 'subjectivity' from a disturbing original 'context,' the former is temporarily placed outside the narrative" (2002: 177). Thus here, too, it is within a narrative context that denarrativization is represented. Moreover, it is because it is placed within a narrative, dynamic context that the denarrativized character of the fragment shines out.

Giomi and Ligabue list a set of narrative strategies in music which are constitutive of musical discourse and which, to a great extent, correspond to Fleischman's narrative norms. They distinguish between introductory strategies, ending strategies, the use of analepsis and prolepsis, and semantic associations. With the exception of semantic associations, which deal with associations that can be evoked with the listener while hearing certain musical events, these strategies are compatible with Fleischman's narrative norms. Introduction strategies are used to "[…] find a sort of 'organized beginning' which has a function of 'introduction' to the composition" (1998: 46). The question is not how the composer starts his/her piece, but "[…] whether the listener perceives the beginning as having a real introductory structure" (46). Ending strategies are necessary in order to both represent a section that formally concludes a composition and to provide for the representation of "[…] a sort of cadenza able to suggest a sense of conclusion" (46). Both the introductory and ending strategies can be related to Fleischman's second norm, which states that narratives contain sequentially ordered events. The use of analepsis and prolepsis, finally, can be related to both this norm and the third, i.e. the temporal order of the events in the fabula represents the default order of the events on the story level. Regarding this strategy Giomi and Ligabue remark:

> At several levels of the musical discourse we find procedures we can identify as narrative repeat (analepsis) and narrative anticipation (prolepsis). Some elements of narration are anticipated or repeated inside the general development of the sound text; this can happen at different levels, clearly at the level of events and syntagms, but also for whole sections or for the musical realization of some sound parameters. (47)

Giomi and Ligabue discuss the ways in which the default order of a musical narrative can be altered. They do not mention in what way one can identify a default order in a precise manner, but at least in tonal music this can be done. One can recognize harmonic progression and its alterations fairly easy. In atonal music things get a bit more complicated. Before the listener is able to perceive alterations of a default order in an atonal musical piece, paradigms have to be created for this piece. This can be established, as I explained above, by comparing marked and unmarked terms. Only after this is done it is possible to identify analepsis and prolepsis.

If it were not possible to create paradigms in atonal music, this music would be considered to be ungraspable and impossible to comprehend. For, as Albrecht Wellmer argues, it is the musical form that makes possible relating music to something outside the music itself:

> While the link between literature and some kind of reality is established at its origin, since it can already be found in the linguistic material itself, the link between music and reality [hypothetical or otherwise] only arises from the music's specific "formal" structure of its temporal organization.[32]

According to Wellmer, it is the music's temporal form that allows the possibility of attributing meaning to a musical piece and making it comprehensible to the listener. Moreover, Newcomb contends that this form also is constitutive of musical narrativity:

> The musical detours, ambiguities and challenges-to-sense that invite […] interpretative activity constitute […] the internal musical element […] of what I mean by musical narrativity. These detours, ambiguities and challenges are then complemented by the second element [of musical narrative], contributed by the individual listener, to produce the narrative itself, which […] may vary widely according to the listener, the listening occasion and the cultural context. (1994: 88)

Musical detours and ambiguities are all what I would call marked terms. And as I explained above, marked terms can only be identified within a known musical context, i.e. the musical paradigm or style type, or, more generally: the musical form of the composition. And, as Newcomb also acknowledges, it is up to the individual listener to recognize this musical form and thus to make sense of the musical piece.

The process of music transgressing style types and the establishment of idiosyncratic strategies of realization within a musical composition contribute to the creation of musical narrativity as well. As Newcomb remarks:

> As I locate these detours and ambiguities in the music and propose interpretations of them, I am interested in what some theorists of narrative call breach of canonicity […] the canonical script into which the listener, following subtle generic and stylistic signs, fits the action places some limits on what is permissible in that kind of action. The breaches challenge the listener's ability to bring this succession into harmony with these limits in order to produce […] a "coherent" series, which means one whose parts can be accommodated to this whole. (88-89)

The canonical script, the style type in Hatten's terminology, can be broken with in order to create a unique musical piece. And, as I already elaborated, it is up to the listener to seek correlations between this individual work and the style the listener feels it is compatible with,

[32] "Während der Weltbezug der Literatur gewissermaßen an ihrem Anfang steht, nämlich bereits in ihrem sprachlichen Material steckt, entspringt der Weltbezug der Musik erst aus ihrer spezifischen, 'formalen' Form der Zeitlichen Organisation." (Wellmer 2000: 54, my translation)

while trying to turn this work, with all its individual exceptions to the norm, into a unified whole. Hence, the basic act of narrative musical comprehension is the act of relating a particular musical work to a style type and to make sense of the deviations from this type within that work.

Again, it is easier to carry out this basic act of musical narrative comprehension while listening to a tonal piece than it is while listening to an atonal work. Pasler expresses this difficulty as follows:

> In recent years, there has developed a gap between music whose organizational principles or lack thereof are used to stretch the limits of our perceptions (such as totally serialized works and some chance-determined ones), and music whose experience is easily perceptible but vaguely structured (such as some minimal music and Pauline Oliveros' meditation music). Both have risks – the intricate complexity of the former may be imperceptible, while the utter simplicity of the latter may appear without meaning. (1989: 249)

Atonal music makes no use of standardized style types, but rather creates its own idiosyncratic structures. It is up to the listener to create paradigms with which s/he can interpret the music. Some compositions allow for this creation more than others, and Pasler mentions two musical extremes that challenge the listener in creating these paradigms: serial music, which has a very complex structure (as I also discussed in chapter 1), and minimal music, which is almost lacking any structure. But music that challenges the listener is not the same as music that is impossible to interpret. In the previous chapter I already showed that Reich's minimal composition *Piano Phase* does not lack structure. At this point I want to look closer into a serial musical piece; *Studie II* (1954), an electronic work composed by Karlheinz Stockhausen.

Studie II challenges the listener because it is an integral serial musical composition: both pitch, duration, loudness, and timbre are ordered according to matrices. These matrices consist of numbers that represent the musical proportions by which the musical parameters are organized: pitch, duration, loudness, and the number of sine tones per note – which constitute the timbre – are constructed along the same organizational principles, which results in treating all parameters as being equally important.[33] As a consequence, established tonal musical paradigms might be inadequate to interpret the music. The question

[33] I do not go into the details of the compositional method Stockhausen used in creating this piece. For more information on this, I would like to refer to the booklet accompanying the recording I used to analyze the piece, which is volume three, "Elektronische Musik 1952-1960," of *Stockhausen: Gesamtausgabe*, released by Stockhausen-Verlag. Stroh (1973) and Bozzetti (1973) also discuss the compositional principles of *Studie II*.

remains, however, whether this piece is too complex to perceive its organizational principles, and if so, if this has consequences for its possibilities to be understood as narrative. If this music is so complex, is it then impossible to have musical expectations while listening to this kind of music? Or can the listener still create new musical paradigms to which the musical shapes that s/he is hearing can be related, and even intuit what future musical shapes might sound like?

First and foremost I would like to stress that I do not think it is necessary to perceive the organizational principles of a musical piece in order to comprehend the music, as Pasler seems to argue. As I explained in chapter 1, the listener does not need to know how a composer organized the musical material of a composition, nor does s/he need to recognize this organization in the music s/he is listening to. The possibility of comprehension, narrative or otherwise, of the music does not require the revelation of the composer's intentions – his/her compositional principles, but instead it has to offer possibilities to the listener to literally follow the music. It must be possible to regard the music as consisting of discrete events, which implies a musical past tense, and it must be possible to have musical expectations while listening to the music, a possibility which I tentatively would like to regard as an index for a musical future tense.

Grant believes that *Studie II* cannot be comprehended in a narrative manner in this sense, for she argues that, in this composition,

> [...] our idea of aural reality becomes shattered. The sounds vibrate and move, yet break off so abruptly that they seem ripped out, abstracted from any natural phenomenon, even though each fragment is clearly an excerpt from the original. (2001: 101-102)

Each musical phrase, in itself, can be interpreted as belonging to a larger musical whole, which Grant calls the original. The way these phrases are concatenated, however, implies that the musical composition can only be interpreted as a discontinuous entity. This implies that, although the piece can be considered as consisting of discrete events, it is not possible to distill out of these events a narrative thread, a guiding line by which the listener can follow the course of the music. However, exactly because of this permanent discontinuity, it is possible to predict what will sound next: most likely a different musical event that again will sound as if it were ripped out of some other aural context. The musical piece as a whole, however, in Grant's view remains a discontinuity. But at the same time she identifies *Studie II* as an example of what the artist Paul Klee calls constructive unity: "[...] a unity within the confines of the pictorial frame, or here, the piece" (79-80). The composition is a unity because it creates a sound universe that is unique to this particular work. Thus,

on the one hand, Grant regards *Studie II* as a fragmented, discontinuous piece, while on the other hand she argues that the composition is a unity, because it creates its own universe.

In contrast, music theorists such as Wolfgang Martin Stroh and Elmar Bozzetti regard *Studie II* as a continuous well-structured whole. They claim that the piece has a clear musical structure that can easily be identified by ear. Although Bozzetti only refers to the musical score when explaining this structure, he remarks that the five segments, which together constitute the composition, "[...] can be easily recognized both while reading the score and while listening to the piece."[34] Stroh adds that the five-segment structure of the piece actually is a fairly traditional one, in which contrast, repetition, variation, and recapitulation play a prominent role. These musical elements, he remarks,

> are all traditional formal constants of composing, that clearly are valid for Stockhausen, too. This is remarkable, because for instance Boulez's *Structures Ia*, and other early serial pieces, have avoided such characteristics. They have avoided adopting any traditional "narrative character." Both this division and structure function as an important listening grid for the listener of *Studie II*.[35]

In two ways Stroh's view here differs from Grant's: firstly, he argues that the unity in *Studie II* is created by using traditional musical elements, instead of by constructing a new, unique musical universe, and, secondly, he claims that the structure of the piece acts as a guide for the listener, instead of being a concatenation of discontinuous fragments.

My analysis of *Studie II* I tends more toward Stroh than toward Grant, but not on all accounts. For instance, in this piece I distinguish between nine, instead of five, segments. This distinction is not established by concentrating on the parameter that is the most characteristic of electronic music, i.e. timbre. Because the timbre in *Studie II* is very uniform, it does not offer sufficient marked terms by

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[34] "Die 5 texturen lassen sich sowohl beim lesen der Partitur als auch beim Hören des Werkes leicht erkennen." (Bozzetti 1973: 21, my translation)

[35] "Kontrast, Wiederholung, Variation, Zusammenfassung – das alles sind herkömmliche formale Konstanten des Komponierens, die offensichtlich auch bei Stockhausen noch Gültigkeit haben. Dies ist deshalb durchaus beachtenswert, weil zum Beispiel Boulez' *Structures Ia* und mit ihnen noch einige andere frühe serielle Stücke alle derartigen Anhaltspunkte, alle derartige Übernahme traditionellen "Sprachcharakters" vermieden haben. Diese Einteilung und gliederung ist für den Hörer der *Studie II* ein wesentliches Hör-Raster." (Stroh 1973: 218, my translation) Although "narrative character" is not a literal translation of "Sprachcharakter" ("Sprache" means "language," so the exact translation would be "language character"), I think that the meaning of the term, as used within the context of the quotation, is preserved better this way.

which the music can be segmented. Quite surprisingly, it is by focusing on conventional musical elements that it is possible to organize this piece.

At 0'10" (on volume three, "Elektronische Musik 1952-1960," of *Stockhausen: Gesamtausgabe*, released by Stockhausen-Verlag) the piece opens with a distinct five-note phrase, followed by a short rest. Then, the first phrase is answered by a different five-note phrase in a lower register. This first phrase functions as an opening statement, because of its distinct, clear shape.[36] After the second phrase again a short rest appears, followed by several pitched and non-pitched sounds with a rather short duration. Next, long pitched sounds can be heard; several pitches are repeated. This first segment concludes with a new five-note phrase with a distinct rhythm, consisting of a dotted quarter note, three eight notes and a quarter note. At 0'37" a general pause marks the ending of the first segment. In fact, throughout the piece, the nine segments that together constitute the work are separated by general pauses. Apart from these pauses, many segments also represent closures in other ways, such as the five-note phrase in this first segment.

The fact that it is possible to point out these specific, marked musical events in this segment implies a past tense in this segment of *Studie II*. After all, the musical past is the time in which the music is regarded as consisting of musical events. As soon as the listener can identify discrete events in the music s/he may assume a musical past tense, for this is an ability which acts as an index for musical tense. In the first segment of this piece this clearly is the case. Moreover, since it is possible to divide *Studie II* into nine (discrete) segments, a past tense may be assumed throughout the entire composition.

The second segment opens with a descending melodic perfect fourth, followed by a repetition of the first note and a note that sounds approximately a major tenth below the previous one. The perfect fourth, an interval that is frequently used as an opening interval in tonal music, functions as an opening statement here. Next, an eight-note phrase can be heard, which has a distinct rhythm that consists of two quarter notes, a quarter note tied to a sixteenth note, followed by four sixteenth notes. The phrase ends with a dotted quarter note. Subsequently, long sounds with occasional short tones are produced, and the second segment ends with short tones in which an ascending melodic major second can be noticed. This short phrase is marked relative to the long notes which could be heard before and acts as a closure. Again, a general pause marks the ending of this segment, at 0'54". The third segment consists of long tones, which often have little

[36] Perhaps this phrase can also be interpreted as an apostrophe or an invocation, and maybe other musical openings or musical themes can be regarded as such, too.

or no attack and rapidly turn louder, interrupted by percussive sounds. These sounds act as opening statements: they appear out of nothing and gradually become more and more present by increasing in loudness. Despite their duration, these sounds are not static and are interrupted by short sounds, and thus the listener may still assume a musical past tense here. The segment ends with a short four-note phrase, which, because of its distinct shape, acts as a closure. The general pause, which marks the ending of the third segment, can be heard at 1'28".

The fourth segment opens with the same long, crescendo tones that appeared in the previous segment. These tones are followed by random short tones, ranging from low to very high-pitched sounds. Although these sounds are all short, and thus discrete when taken individually, it is very difficult to identify musical events within this fragment. Only the fragment as a whole can be regarded as an event. This event is too short to evoke a feeling of stasis, but it does give an impression of how intensive movement can suggest stasis. Thus, just as in *Rothko Chapel*, in this fragment the musical present – stasis – is represented in the musical past. Only, in that piece, stasis is represented by non-movement, whereas in *Studie II* it is established by extreme movement in which no discrete events can be identified. The segment ends with longer sounds, in which a distinct harmonic perfect fourth can be heard. This interval acts as a closure here, just as in tonal music a harmonic perfect fourth can act as a closure. At 1'51" the general pause appears which marks the ending of the fourth segment. The next segment opens with long, crescendo tones, followed by sounds that have a clear attack, but no definite pitch. This segment has no distinct closure, only a general pause, and at 2'00", marks the ending of the fifth segment. The sixth segment does have a distinct closure. This segment starts with long, distant sounds that gradually increase in loudness, as if these sounds were approaching the listener, and then suddenly stop. Incidentally, during these sounds other short, not clearly pitched, sounds can be noticed. The segment closes with a low sound in a fast crescendo and which suddenly stops, leaving a general pause at 2'13". This sudden stop acts as a closure in this segment.

The seventh segment consists of an alternation of phrases in which short, pitched sounds can be heard, as well as longer, crescendo sounds. Two short pitches, creating an ascending melodic minor third, represent the closure of this segment. The general pause between this and the next segment appears at 2'29". The eighth segment opens with an alternation of short and longer tones, and ends with two short tones at more or less the same pitch, followed by a louder pitch, approximately a major third lower, and a general pause at 3'00". The final segment consists of three "rolling," very low sounds, which increase in loudness and subsequently turn softer. They are too low to have a clear pitch. With these sounds, the work ends at 3'09".

As I remarked above, during the piece, the timbre of the sounds stays more or less the same; only the density of the sounds varies. In this way *Studie II* indeed creates its own universe, as Grant argues. But in other ways the piece can be placed within a tonal musical tradition. As I have remarked throughout my discussion of the piece, many of the opening statements and closures are created by making use of musical figures that also function as such in tonal music. Paradigms that are normally associated with tonal music thus are still useful here: it is because these figures are identified as opening statements and closures in tonal music, that the opening and closing force of these phrases is that strong in this piece.

Regarding the ending of *Studie II*, Giomi and Ligabue argue that "[...] even though the composer denies a narrative element in his serial plans for the piece, he seems to add a well-defined distinctive element as a conclusion" (1998: 48). Indeed, the ending of the piece is very different from the rest of the work: it gives the impression that the music literally "washes away." Stroh remarks that this ending is created by deviating from the serial principles with which *Studie II* is constructed (1973: 221-222). This is a confirmation of Giomi and Ligabue's contention that Stockhausen has deliberately added a distinct conclusion to the piece, and thus has inserted a narrative element in his music.

But regardless whether or not the composer intentionally has created a narrative moment at the ending of the piece, throughout *Studie II* opening statements and closures can be heard, next to repetition, recapitulation and variation of musical material. Moreover, as I explained above, established musical paradigms still can be applied, albeit in a limited way. A telling example is the opening of the piece, in which a melodic phrase is answered by another melodic phrase. Although these melodies are not diatonic, they do constitute a more or less traditional opening statement. Or, perhaps more accurate, this phrase allows for a reading in which the phrase is interpreted as such. Likewise, other moments in the piece can be read in a more or less conventional manner. And because these moments act as orientation points in the music, it is possible to follow the course of the composition and even to have expectations of the musical shapes that will sound next. Thus, *Studie II*, an electronic integral serial composition, allows for a reading in which established musical paradigms still are useful to a certain extent. I would even go so far as to claim that, just as in tonal, acoustic music, pitch is the main musical actor in this piece. Furthermore, throughout the composition the listener is able to identify discrete events in the music, an ability that acts as an index for a musical past tense. Moreover, these events constitute a musical context in which the events can be interpreted. For instance, they can be interpreted as representing tension or resolution.

As a conclusion, I maintain that we both can regard *Studie II* as being comprehensible in a narrative manner and may assume a musical past tense throughout the work. Established musical paradigms are still useful and it remains possible to discern discrete events in the piece. These events together constitute an interplay of tension and resolution, which in turn leads to the representation of a temporal development.

Although musical tense is primarily derived from Fleischman's theory of verbal narrative, it is not a translation of a general account of verbal tense. As I explained in this chapter, it is the musical equivalent of the special function tense has in narrative. It cannot be pointed out in the music directly, as opposed to tense in verbal narrative. It is only because the listener can detect discrete, retainable segments in a particular composition, an ability that acts as an index for musical tense in that work, that s/he is made aware of musical tense.

Actually, my definition of musical tense is nothing else but an elaboration of the process during which a listener makes sense of perception in narratological terms. It is the process of making sense of what the listener is hearing. Put differently: musical tense is the condition that makes musical comprehension possible. Moreover, because of musical tense the perception of music can be made discursive.

Yet, for some, the communication of a musical experience might equal its corruption, a simplification. However, I maintain that music analysis can make a musical experience more complex, rather than simpler. A discursive account of a musical piece can enrich music listening. It is in principle impossible to grasp the complete musical experience in a discursive account. But by focusing on certain potentialities of music instead, and discussing these potentialities in depth, one might arrive at an articulation that is an intensification of the listening experience, rather than a mere description of it. In this way, this experience might be enriched, rather than only strictly analyzed. In this study I hope to contribute to this enrichment, for instance by focusing on another important characteristic of (musical) narrative: the sense that narratives move toward certain goals. Narratives suggest some sense of motion, a sense of going in some direction. Music elicits this sense perhaps even stronger than verbal narrative does. In the following chapter, I will discuss the ways music can arouse this feeling of goal-directed motion within a narratological context.

4 ENDS

Longing for Linearity

Musical motion is a spatial metaphor, while music is a temporal art. In music, movement is represented by the succession of sounds – and succession is a temporal notion. This succession is only noticeable because of musical tense, i.e. the possibility of discerning discrete events – the musical past – within the continuum of sounds – the musical present. It is because of the perception of discrete events that a listener can have expectations regarding the course the music will take, and, consequently, that s/he perceives the music as taking a certain course.

In verbal narrative a similar phenomenon can take place. Novels also display a sense of direction, a sense of laying out a certain path which the reader can follow. Peter Brooks argues that it is because of the phenomenon he calls "plotting" that the reader experiences such sensations. He defines plotting as:

> [t]hat which moves us forward as readers of the narrative text […] seeking through the narrative text as it unfurls before us a precipitation of shape and meaning, some simulacrum of understanding of how meaning can be construed over and through time. (1984: 35)

Through plotting, the reader seizes the active work of structuring revealed or dramatized in the text (34-35). Plotting thus is the activity of distilling structure and meaning from a text while reading it.[1] In other words: plotting is the activity that ultimately leads to a sense of comprehension.

Brooks gives different definitions of plot: plot is the design and intention of narrative, what shapes a story and gives it a certain direction or intent of meaning. But it is also the logic or syntax of a certain kind of discourse, one that develops its propositions only through temporal sequence and progression (xi). Yet, plot is the logic and dynamic of narrative, too, while narrative itself is a form of understanding and explanation (10). Furthermore, plot can be looked upon as the constant of all written and oral narrative, in that a narrative without at least a minimal plot would be incomprehensible. In this sense, plot is the principle of interconnectness and intention which the

[1] With "meaning" I refer to the result of an act of interpretation by the listener, one which is compatible with Hatten's account of meaning (see chapter 3): a musical event becomes meaningful because it is related to other musical events within a context in such a way that this event is the marked term.

reader, or listener, cannot do without in moving through the discrete elements of a narrative (5). In short: plot is a structuring operation elicited by, and made necessary by, those meanings that develop through succession and time (12).

Brooks contends that narrative, and plot as its shaping force, plays a prominent role in the way the human subject thinks, perceives and interprets the world around him/her:

> Narrative is one of the ways in which we speak, one of the large categories in which we think. Plot is its thread of design and its active shaping force, the product of our refusal to allow temporality to be meaningless, our stubborn insistence on making meaning in the world and in our lives. (323)

His contention is similar to the argument I elaborated in chapter 1: because a human subject cannot but interpret temporality – s/he has to make sense of the things that happen to him/her, and around him/her, in time – s/he creates narratives. Through narrative, Brooks argues, s/he can grasp time, and, conversely, narrative meanings are developed in time (282). According to him, the manner in which a subject interprets time and in which narrative meanings are created differs from poetry. Poetic meanings, he argues, are not developed in time:

> Lyric poetry strives toward an ideal simultaneity of meaning, encouraging us to read backward as well as forward (through rhyme and repetition, for instance), to grasp the whole in one visual and auditory image […] [N]arratives […] are temporal syllogisms, concerning the connective process of time […] Plot as a logic of narrative would hence seem to be analogous to the syntax of meanings that are temporally unfolded and recovered, meaning that cannot otherwise be created or understood. (20-21)

In other words: in contrast to poetry, narrative meaning is related to linearity, i.e. some kind of forward motion that is implied by the narrative, with plot being its shaping force. Poetry, on the other hand, arouses no real, compelling sense that the reader has to read on to the next sentence, the next page, the next chapter. Instead, poetry invites the reader to read the poem in all kinds of directions, and not explicitly in a linear fashion. Poetry generally is nonlinear, whereas narrative is predominantly linear.

In music, too, a distinction between linearity and nonlinearity can be made. Jonathan D. Kramer argues that virtually all music utilizes a mixture of linearity and nonlinearity. He defines musical linearity as the determination of some characteristics of music in accordance with implications that arise from earlier events of the piece. Musical linearity thus is processive (1988: 20). It evokes a sense of motion, created by a succession of musical events, in which earlier events imply later events and later events can be regarded as consequences of

earlier events. Defined as such, musical linearity complies with the listening process I described in chapter 2: the listener recognizes musical events and musical phrases and then organizes these into larger units while listening to the music. At the same time, musical linearity can be regarded as a musical counterpart of forward motion in narrativity, as described by Brooks, while nonlinear music can be regarded as the musical equivalent of poetry. Kramer defines musical nonlinearity as being nonprocessive. It is "[…] the determination of some characteristic(s) of music in accordance with implications that arise from principles or tendencies governing an entire piece or section" (20). Events in nonlinear music cannot be regarded as the consequence of earlier events, but rather as the consequence of general principles, or, to use the terminology I introduced in the previous chapter, of musical paradigms.[2]

Tonal music is an example of music that exhibits such a general principle. More specifically, it is functional harmony that can be regarded as the organizing principle of tonal music. This type of music, however, is not nonlinear. On the contrary: tonal music is perhaps the most linear music the Western listener can listen to.[3] Because of functional harmony, tonal music is both linear – the listener has a sense of direction and motion when listening to tonal music – and teleological; it is goal-oriented. While listening to tonal music, the Western listener often has clear expectations about the direction the music will take, so, what the goal of a musical phrase might be, and can recognize and qualify – to a certain extent – possible deviations from the "normal" tonal path the music might take, and thus whether this goal has been reached or not. This is possible both because the Western listener is familiar – consciously or not – with the general principle that underlies tonal music and because the musical events seem to be interrelated. This characteristic also depends on the general principle of functional harmony.[4] Thus, we can say that general principles or style types govern both linear and nonlinear music. Linear music, however, also exhibits more or less clear cause-and-effect

[2] Bear in mind that, strictly speaking, phenomena like musical linearity and goal-directedness are not in the music itself, but are represented by the music. All these phenomena depend on musical motion, which is evoked by the succession of musical events, that themselves are representations, rather than actual physical entities, as I explained in chapter 2.

[3] Here, I make an explicit distinction between Western and non-Western listeners, since functional harmony is a product of Western culture. Functional harmony is not some kind of universal principle, as some musicians, composers, and theorists want to believe (see chapters 1 and 6). Therefore, it is not at all self-evident that a non-Western listener experiences functional harmony in the same way as a Western listener does.

[4] Obviously, in tonal music nonlinear passages can also be heard. Tonal music is not exclusively linear and goal-directed.

relations between subsequent musical events, which create a sense of forward motion.

Linearity and goal-directedness is more difficult to achieve in contemporary, atonal music, as Kramer observes. He remarks that, though much twentieth-century music exhibits some degree of linearity, only some of that linearity is goal-directed. Many atonal compositions are, like tonal music, in constant motion, but the goals of this motion are not always unequivocal (39-40). But this does not mean that strong linearity and goal-directedness is impossible to achieve in contemporary music, although many theorists seem to argue otherwise. Claus-Steffen Mahnkopf is not one of them. He acknowledges that, in atonal music, pitch does not create as strong a sense of linearity and goal-directedness as in tonal music. This does not mean, however, that he believes rhythm thus is the only remaining musical parameter that establishes a sense of directedness in atonal music:

> It seems as if in (more developed) atonality *only* the rhythmical dimension establishes a sense of temporality (whereas in tonality musical time is *predominantly* established by harmony). This would mean that musical discursivity is no longer *entirely* structured temporally. Despite the predominance of rhythm, this contention can be qualified, in the sense that both musical discursivity and temporal processes can be directed by other parameters (such as pitch, timbre, density).[5]

It is not just functional harmony that gives the music a sense of linearity. Although functional harmony is a very effective means to create linearity, it is not the only way in which this can be established. And this is a point many theorists seem to overlook when discussing notions like musical linearity or musical narrativity. As Christopher F. Hasty remarks: "The assertion that in new music events are necessarily disconnected and that this discontinuity is so absolute as to negate temporal succession is […] unfounded" (1986: 73). In other words: although there is no functional harmony in a contemporary, atonal musical composition, this does not automatically imply that the musical events within this musical piece are unrelated. It still is possible, and even probable, that earlier events in this musical work imply later events and later events can be regarded as consequences of earlier events, and thus creating linearity, and in the end perhaps even

[5] "[Es] scheint […], als ob in der (fortgeschrittenen) Atonalität die Dimension des Rhythmus *allein* zeitkonstitutiv ist (während in der Tonalität *vor allem* die Harmonik die musikalische Zeit ausprägt). Das hieße, daß musikalische Diskursivität nicht mehr *ingesamt* zeitlich strukturiert wäre. Trotz aller Priorität des Rhythmischen ist dieser Gedanke jedoch insofern einzuschränken, als auch über die anderen Parameter (etwa Tonhöhe, Farbe, Dichte) sich die musikalische Diskursivität auf der einen, zeitliche Abläufe auf der anderen Seite steuern lassen." (Mahnkopf 2000: 365, emphasis in original, my translation)

narrativity, although this would be established with the aid of means other than functional harmony.

Regarding the possibility of goal-directedness in contemporary, atonal music, Neytcheva observes the following:

> As the main force behind the goal-directed time in music – tonal harmony – lost its power, the possibilities for creating a variety of contextual orders of musical events grew: from time reduced to one frozen "now" to the sophisticated structures of "multiple-directed time." Gestures shaping time in music of the post-tonal age can hardly be called "conventions." They are products of the composer's particular style, technique, or time concept, rather than parts of the common vocabulary. (2001: 103)

Rather than looking upon the loss of functional harmony as a loss of an effective means to create goal-directedness, Neytcheva regards this loss as an opportunity to represent in music other forms of temporality, such as stasis.[6] She furthermore remarks that these new possibilities are the result of, what I called in the previous chapter, the idiosyncratic paradigms that the contemporary composer has to conceive anew for each composition. However, she is not explicit about the question whether or not atonal music can be goal-directed.

Kramer is more outspoken about this:

> For a posttonal composition to be temporally linear *with goals*, there must be a clear sense of continuity, provided by the voice leading or perhaps by other directional processes in some parameters. Furthermore, goals must either be defined contextually (by reiteration or emphasis, as in the Webern Cantata) or established *a priori* (by reference to (neo)tonal procedures, as in the Hindemith sonata). (1988: 39, emphasis in original)

Goals thus can be created either within a musical work itself, and in so doing establish their own idiosyncratic paradigm. Goals can also be created by referring to existing style types, such as tonality. In this fashion, the music gives the listener something to go by, to make sense of the music. In Brooks's terminology: these musical characteristics allow the listener to plot, i.e. to distil structure and meaning (which depends on structure, i.e. the sum of the relations with both intramusical and extramusical phenomena) from a (contemporary) musical piece while listening to it. As a consequence, this concept of plotting in music is related to the process of organizing musical sounds into larger units, and to the creation of musical contexts, and thus also to musical comprehension and to the UNLL-process I discussed in chapter 1. It is through organizing – and thus structuring – the music the listener is hearing that s/he can distil some kind of meaning out of

[6] In the previous chapter, I have shown that it is very hard, if not impossible, for music to actually be static, this in contrast to the representation of stasis in music.

it, and that s/he might ultimately regard it as a narrative. In the analysis below I hope to show that this is also possible in the case of atonal music.

Plotting Atonality

Ligeti's *Ten Pieces for Wind Quintet* (1968) can be regarded as a collection of ten short studies on the ways in which plotting can be elicited or disturbed. In this composition, every second piece is a kind of a mini-concerto featuring one instrument as soloist, while in the other pieces a unified ensemble can be heard. And although the title suggests that the composition consists of ten separate pieces, these pieces actually are interrelated in some way or another. In fact, I maintain it is possible to interpret the work as a whole in a narrative manner, even though some pieces of this composition, viewed in isolation, might appear to be non-narrative.

The first piece, "Molto sostenuto e calmo," starts off with the instruments playing soft, slowly moving chords. Between 0'04" and 1'22" (as performed by the London Winds in the recording released by Sony Classical SK 62309; bars 1-12 in the score), the individual instruments play short phrases that seem to move in and out of those chords. This fragment can be regarded as being in what Kramer calls nondirected linear time. He explains that in nondirected linear time, there is no clearly implied goal, despite the directed continuity of motion (1988: 46). There is a sense of motion, created by those phrases that move in and out of the chords.[7] This motion also is continuous, as it is repeated over and over, but there is no clear goal implied by the movement of the phrases and the chords. The motion is more or less circular. There is no clear development noticeable and hence also no clear goal. After all, the implication or anticipation of a goal can only be created by some kind of development. Thus, if there is no development to be discerned, no anticipation of a goal is created.

Starting at 1'23" (bar 13), the circularity is broken by an acceleration of movement. At the same time, the voices are thinning, resulting in a very short moment of silence at 1'31" (bar 16; ex. 4.1). This moment acts as a closure, and at the same time can be seen as an anticipated goal.[8] As the voices are thinning, the listener expects a further thinning and softening of the music s/he is listening to. And

[7] Again, the phrases do not really "move," but rather suggest movement by the succession of sounds that constitute the chords and phrases. These sounds represent movement by succession. Likewise, an eventual temporal development that can be noticed in the music is a representation, too (see chapter 2).

[8] One could argue that all goals are at the same time closures, but this is not always the case. A melody can work towards some anticipated note, for instance, but this note does not have to be a closure. When this note is followed by, say, a period of silence, this period is regarded as a closure, rather than that particular note.

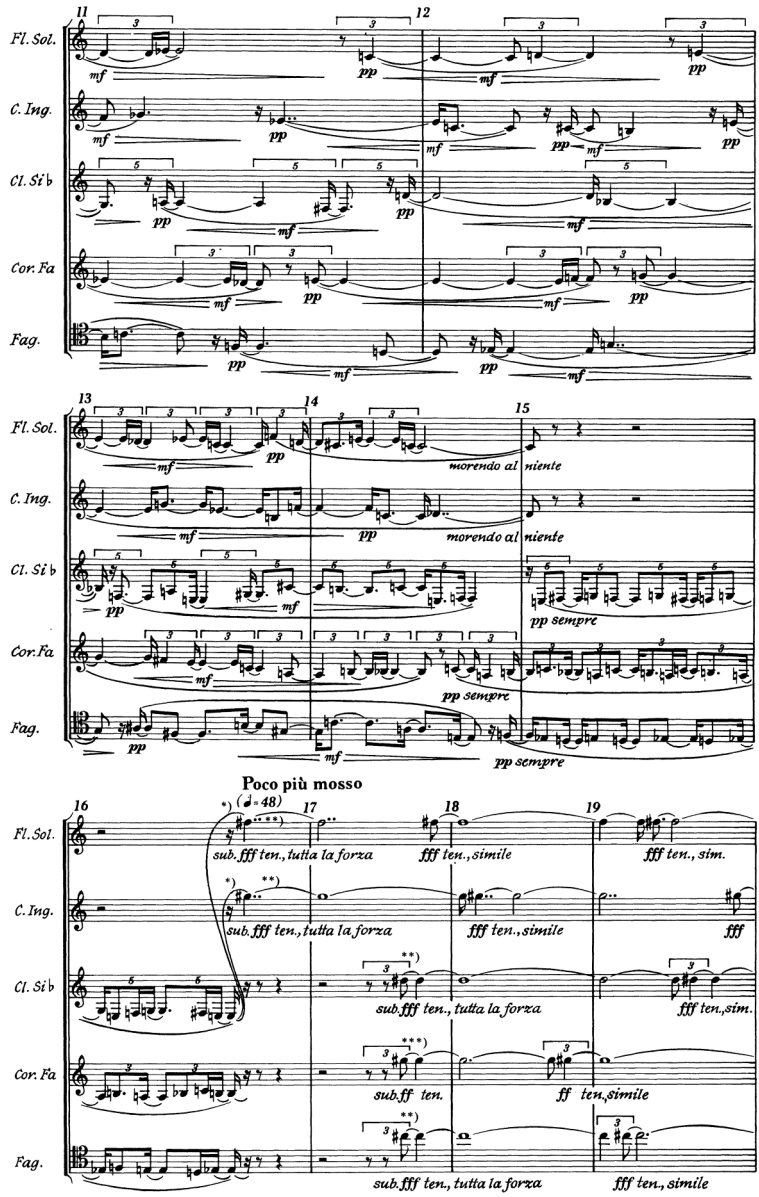
indeed, at 1'31" (bar 16) the ultimate softness, i.e. silence, can be heard, albeit extremely briefly. To phrase this in terms of plotting: The diminuendo and thinning of the texture allow for the distilling of a structure and meaning while listening, namely the working towards silence. Or, in narratological terms: dynamics and texture are the musical actors, as they create musical events and/or change during these events. At the same time, a musical context is created in which musical sounds can be interpreted as heading towards a certain goal.

The first piece ends by first implying a new goal: between 1'33" and 1'46" (bars 17-19) a loud crescendo interval can be heard; the flute, clarinet, horn, and bassoon play a C sharp, while the English horn plays a G sharp. At 1'47" (bar 20) the horn and bassoon change to a D natural, creating tension with the other instruments. Between 1'47" and 1'51" (bars 20-21) the flute and the English horn, playing a B natural and an F sharp, respectively, resolve this tension. Next, dissonance is created again by the bassoon playing an E flat. At 1'58" (bar 22), finally, the volume suddenly drops and the piece ends with the instruments playing a soft chord (ex. 4.2). Thus, one could argue that in bars 17-21 there is a buildup of tension, with pitch being the main musical actor, which asks for some kind of resolution which actually occurs. The ending of the piece, while acting as a closure, arrives unanticipated, and therefore is not regarded as a goal.

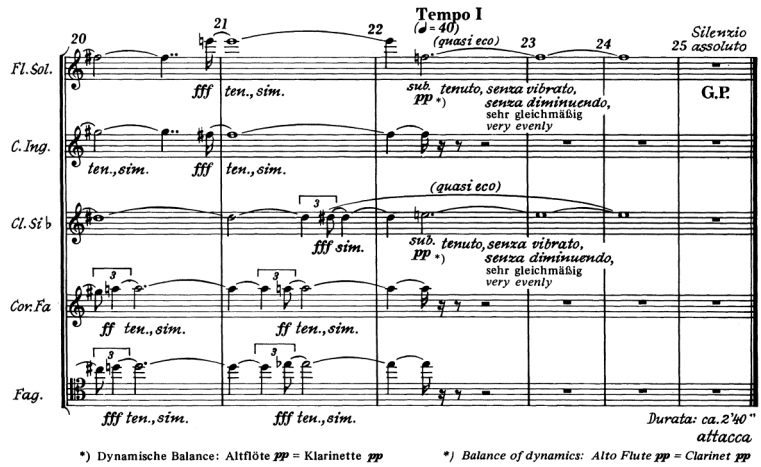
However, it is not at all certain that the tension in bar 20 asks for the specific resolution as it can be heard in bars 20-21. This tension could be resolved in many other ways. Moreover, since this a piece of atonal music, one could also argue that there is no tension at all; the listener only interprets bar 20 as such because s/he has heard a resolution next, and thereby retroactively interpreting bar 20 as creating tension. S/he can only label bar 20 as a cause after s/he has experienced the effect in bars 20-21.[9] As a result, the listener is only able to anticipate the resolution as a genuine goal if s/he can remember this resolution during a second or later hearing of the piece. Regarding this issue, Charles D. Morrison, in his analysis of this piece, remarks the following:

> [I]t is often not easy to determine what the goals are before we reach them, and when we do reach them we are cognizant of arrival more through conditions such as agogic accent, dynamic exposure, and rhythmic caesura, than through specific functionally directed progressions. In these instances it is only *after* the location and functions of the piece's structural points are realized. (1985: 159, emphasis in original)

[9] This reversal of causal hierarchy already has been described by Friedrich Nietzsche (1966: 804), and can be regarded as a model of the general procedures of deconstruction, as elaborated by Jacques Derrida (see for instance Derrida 1967).



Example 4.1. György Ligeti, *Ten Pieces for Wind Quintet*, first piece, bars 11-19.



Example 4.2. György Ligeti, *Ten Pieces for Wind Quintet*, first piece, bars 20-25.
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Morrison, too, acknowledges that many goals can only be perceived as such after the fact. He observes that it is mostly through dynamics and rhythm that these goals are anticipated. Remarkably, he does not regard these anticipations as what he calls functionally directed. It is not exactly clear what he views as a functionally directed anticipation, but it seems as if he believes that these kinds of anticipations can only be achieved by a succession of pitches. He contends that

> […] while the ear inevitably connects contiguous (and even non-contiguous) pitches […] which are in a stepwise relationship to one another, such connections are particularly significant, and indeed most palpable, when the stepwise event […] connects points otherwise articulated, established, and thus contextually anticipated as points of "centric orientation." In such cases, stepwise continuity may be heard as contextually directed towards a discernible goal, appreciable in light of a known structural framework, rather than through tendencies intrinsic to the progression itself. (159)

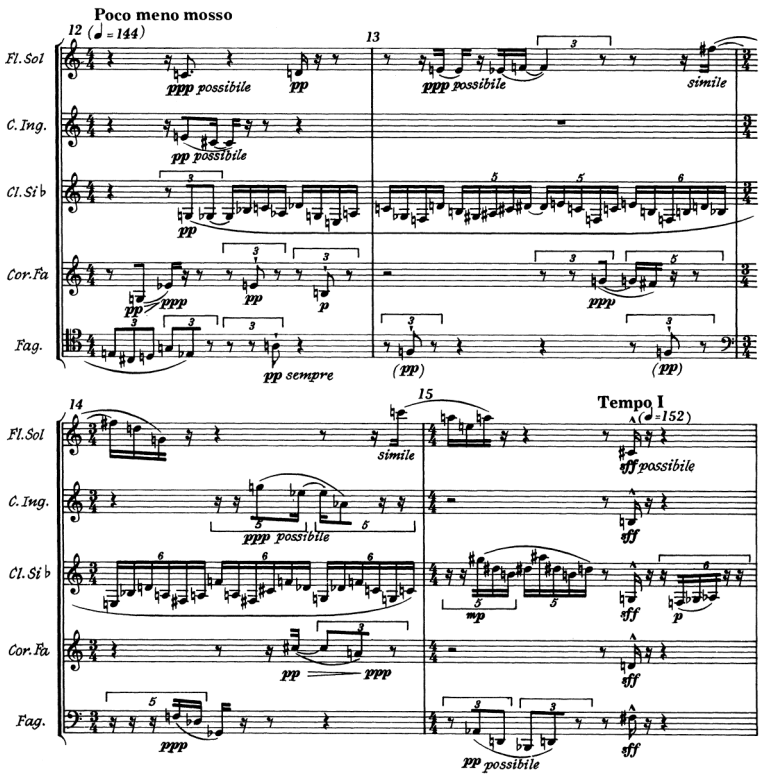
In the terms I introduced in chapter 3, Morrison argues that melodic stepwise motion creates a musical context. This musical space again points to a known style type, within which the listener can plot his/her way through the composition towards a goal. Interestingly, Morrison seems to imply that, only when the musical context can be related to a style type already established, goals can be discerned. He seems to deny the possibility of creating a new style type while listening to the music by claiming that goals cannot be discerned through tendencies intrinsic to the progression itself. Yet, the question then remains about how these existing style types originally where established. As I

explained in the previous chapter, for many, if not most, contemporary musical works new style types have to be formed by listening to these works, since they do not comply with conventional types. But this is a manner of creation which Morrison does not seem to acknowledge.

Instead, Morrison suggests that pitch-class sets form a suitable structural framework with which the listener can anticipate goals. He is convinced that the listener can perceive musical completion, anticipation, and resolution via the aural recognition of these sets. This, however, is very hard to accomplish. While pitch-class set theory might be an adequate means to analyze contemporary music, it cannot be regarded as a model for the way a listener organizes the music s/he is hearing. As I remarked in chapter 1, music analysis sometimes tends to reduce music, which is a temporal, aural form of expression, into a spatial and visual one. Indeed, when studying the score one might be able to identify pitch-class sets and find out how these sets constitute goals, but trying to do the same while hearing the music only, is something else completely. Hence, Morrison's analysis of goal-directedness in Ligeti's *Ten Pieces for Wind Quintet* cannot serve as an adequate account of the way a listener can plot his/her way through the music. Below, I will try to show how such an account can be given, by analyzing the remaining nine pieces of Ligeti's work.

The second piece of this composition, "Prestissimo minaccioso e burlesco," begins with an alternation of staccato chords and short clarinet phrases between 0'00" and 0'07" (bars 1-8). In this alternation some kind of direction and development can be observed, as the clarinet phrases grow gradually longer, which can function as a clue for plotting. Thus, rhythm is the main musical actor here, while a musical context is generated by the interplay of the chords and the phrases. Between 0'08" and 0'11" (bars 9-12), the clarinet end up in a long descending phrase, partly accompanied by the flute and bassoon. This phrase is clearly goal-directed, with pitch being the musical actor. The next part, however, is not. Between 0'13" and 0'16" (bars 13-15) fast phrases in what Kramer calls multiply-directed linear time, can be heard (ex. 4.3). As I explained in chapter 1, Kramer defines multiply-directed linear time as time in which "[t]here is a sense of motion, but the direction of that motion is anything but unequivocal" (1988: 46). The phrases, played by all five instruments, elicit a strong sense of motion, but do not imply one clear goal or direction, and thus provide no clear clue for plotting. A staccato chord, which functions as a closure, suddenly interrupts this motion at 0'17" (bar 15). This closure cannot be regarded as a goal, since it was not anticipated in any way. Between 0'20" and 0'26" (bars 18-22) again an alternation of staccato chords and melodic phrases can be heard, and then a closing phrase, played from 0'27" to 0'29" (bars 23-24) by all instruments. This phrase acts as a cadenza, and can be seen as a goal of the preceding

part. Out of this cadenza, a single, long clarinet note rings through, which almost sounds like the tonic of the piece. Although it seems as if this were the end of this piece, from 0'34" to 0'37" (bars 28-29) a fast crescendo ending is played by all instruments. This part can be regarded as a kind of coda.



Example 4.3. György Ligeti, *Ten Pieces for Wind Quintet*, second piece, bars 12-15.

The beginning of the third piece, "Lento," resembles the beginning of the first, but instead the chords seem to move toward resolutions. Between 0'42" and 0'51" (bars 8-9) a building up of tension through a crescendo repetitive phrase in the flute, the clarinet, and the bassoon is created. Texture is the main musical actor here. This resolves into a long phrase played by the flute, the English horn, and the bassoon in nondirected linear time, while the clarinet and horn play longer notes that gradually increase in volume, adding a stronger sense of motion to the part in nondirected linear time, and presenting dynamics as a musical actor. Still, no obvious clues for plotting can be discerned. The

ending of this part at 1'09" (bar 14) acts as a closure. During the remainder of this piece tempo is the main musical actor, for a decelerating repetition of a melodic minor second in the flute and a major second in the clarinet anticipate the ending of the piece, which also is the goal of this phrase, i.e. a total stop.

The fourth piece, "Prestissimo leggiero e virtuoso," consists of flute phrases, accompanied by the clarinet and bassoon, all in multiply-directed time, while the fifth piece, "Presto staccatissimo e leggiero," is in nondirected linear time, presenting texture and dynamics as the musical actors. The sudden crescendo at the end of the piece, which sounds like a cadenza, and thus like an anticipated goal, is no longer in nondirected linear time. Therefore, this part is the only moment in these two pieces that the listener has a clear clue for plotting. The sixth piece, "Presto staccatissimo e leggiero," also does not provide such clues, and neither does the seventh. The sixth starts off as a continuation of the fourth, that is, in nondirected linear time, but culminates in an alternation of static chords and multiply-directed oboe phrases. The seventh piece, "Vivo, energico," begins in a similar way as the second does, except for the short phrases that alternate with the chords. The piece develops into longer chords and staccato phrases, which are all unanticipated.

Despite the lack of clues for plotting within these pieces themselves, up until the end of the seventh piece, coherence in the composition as a whole is created by the referring to parts of earlier pieces in later ones. Thus, while it is sometimes very hard to identify structure within the pieces, it is possible to plot a way through the composition. Moreover, some kind of development can be noticed during the course of the work, since phrases that refer to earlier pieces are modified, and this modification can be interpreted as resulting from the music that is played between the original and the modified phrase.

The beginning of the eighth piece, "Allegro con delicatezza," has some resemblances with the ending of the third. A sonic continuum, resembling stasis, is represented by the repetition of the same melodic thirds in the flute, the clarinet, and the bassoon, each playing these in a different rhythm. Gradually, the pitches and rhythms change and nondirected phrases emerge. Then, an alternation of long chords and phrases can be heard, culminating in a more or less goal-directed melody that is played by the horn, with pitch as the musical actor. At 1'55" (bar 37), long notes in the other instruments accompany this melody. At 2'11" (bar 40) a long, moderately dissonant chord can be heard, that is resolved at 2'19" (bar 42). As a result, while the beginning of this piece adds to the structure of the composition as a whole, its ending provides clues for plotting a way through the piece itself.

A high E flat, played by the piccolo, the oboe, and the clarinet, starts off the ninth piece, "Sostenuto, stridente." Since the dynamics stay the same, and the only changing element is the breathing of the players, on the one hand this phrase provides no clue at all for plotting. On the other hand, however, because of its static character, the phrase suggests a continuation of this stasis, and this could be regarded as a clear structuring clue. However, at 0'28" (bar 8), the feeling of stasis is dissolved when a dissonance is created, as the clarinet changes to an E natural, while the piccolo and the oboe continue playing an E flat. This dissonance is resolved as soon as the piccolo plays a D natural and, and the clarinet plays the same D natural a little later. During the remainder of the piece, the notes gradually rise, arousing the expectation that the notes will continue rising, and the piece indeed ends with the highest note of the piece. As a result, this piece does not offer clear possibilities for relating it to the rest of the composition – it stands out on its own within the context of the work. Yet, it does provide clues for structuring the piece on its own, and in two seemingly contradictory ways; both by stasis and movement clues for structuring the piece, and thus for plotting, are suggested.

The final piece, "Presto bizzarro e rubato, so schnell wie möglich," begins with short phrases, in multiply-directed time, which are played by the bassoon, with frequent interruptions by the oboe, the clarinet, and the horn from 0'00" to 0'18" (bars 1-8). The shape of the phrases does not refer to other pieces, but the structure of this part, i.e. the alternation of short phrases and interruptions, does. Between 0'18" and 0'25" (bars 8-9) the bassoon plays a repetitive solo phrase that gradually slows down – and suggests a goal, i.e. a total stop, which however never arrives. From 0'25" to 0'32" (bars 10-11) the piccolo echoes this phrase. After a bar of silence, between 0'33" and 0'43" (bars 13-15) short phrases in multiply-directed time are played by all instruments except for the piccolo. This instrument plays a long note during the remainder of the piece, accompanied first by the clarinet at 0'44" (bar 16) and next by the bassoon from 0'45" to 0'49" (bars 17-18). This accompaniment has a strong repetitive, circular character. At 0'56" (bar 21), the piccolo suddenly stops playing, while a short, staccato note in the bassoon signals the end of the piece and at the same time acts as a closure of the composition as a whole.[10]

[10] In the score, published by Schott Musik International Mainz in 1969 (renewed 1997), under the final note the following quotation from Lewis Carroll's *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* is written: "'… but –' There was a long pause. 'Is that all?' Alice timidly asked. 'That's all,' said Humpty Dumpty. 'Good-bye.'" This quotation can be interpreted as indicating that the ending has to be sudden and must not sound like an ending, but rather like the arousing of an anticipation of a continuation, which will not happen. However, the final note acts as a very clear closure, albeit perhaps an unexpected one. Hence, the ending indeed might appear sudden, but still sounds very much like an ending, at least to my ears.

In the above analysis, I mainly focussed on the manners in which Ligeti's work allows for plotting, with plotting regarded as an activity through which structure is distilled from a musical piece while listening to it. However, plotting is more than that; it is also an activity through which meaning emerges. It seems as if, in my analysis, I have disregarded this aspect of plotting. Yet, as I elaborated in the previous chapter, a musical event becomes meaningful once it is related to other musical events, and with extramusical phenomena, within a context. In other words: by structuring music one also ascribes meaning to it. For it is only then that marked and unmarked terms can be identified, which forms the basis for meaning attribution. The goals, the closures, the resistance against and the providing for structural clues that I identified in *Ten Pieces for Wind Quintet* all can be regarded as marked terms, and thus can be interpreted as meaningful within their proper contexts.

Moment, Repetition, Endlessness

The analysis of *Ten Pieces for Wind Quintet* shows that several kinds of motion can occur in music, such as motion in nondirected or multiply-directed linear time. One of the most extreme kinds of motion is non-movement, or, as Stockhausen and Kramer call it, moment form. According to Kramer, this kind of motion can be noticed in music that consists of moments, whose order is seemingly arbitrary. It appears as if the piece has no beginning and no ending, no development, no order, no movement. Kramer furthermore argues that it still might be possible to detect motion within the separate moments – although even that might be eliminated – but there is no movement noticeable between the consecutive moments. Each moment is an island (1988: 202-203).

Since the individual moments themselves can contain motion and linearity, Pasler argues that moment form can still be narrative in a sense. Although moment form would seem to imply that a large-scale narrative curve is inapplicable, it can still impose some kind of narrativity. If each moment is self-contained and can be appreciated for itself, it does not need to have any connection to succeeding or preceding moments. Individual sections or moments indeed can have a number of narrative curves. Thus, Pasler asserts, compositions consisting of moment form only seems to resist the notion of narrative when these compositions are taken as a whole. Its constituent parts can still be interpreted in a narrative manner (1989: 244-245).[11]

[11] In a similar fashion, in chapter 2 I argued that the recognition of musical events generally depends on the representation of temporal development, regardless whether the musical work as a whole can be interpreted as such a representation. It is because one can detect some kind of momentary, local development that we can identify musical events.

But is moment form indeed a discontinuous form, a collection of isolated events? As I showed in the analysis of Feldman's *Rothko Chapel*, it is very hard, if not impossible, to attain stasis – non-movement – and real discontinuity in music. Although one can insert long pauses in the music, or juxtapose musical events that seem to have nothing in common with each other, the human mind always tries to find a way to create some kind of unity in the music it is digesting.[12] Kramer, too, argues that this kind of music still has form, and thus some kind of unity. He maintains that

> […] even music purely in moment time does have discernible form and that the form comes from the proportions and/or consistencies of the moments: both nonlinear principles […] As we listen to a piece, we accumulate more and more information concerning its form. The more we hear, the more we understand the nonlinearity embodied in the consistency and balance (or lack of it) that generate the nonlinear form. (1988: 52)

The process Kramer describes here resembles plotting (and the UNLL-process I described in chapter 1), in the sense that, as the listener proceeds in listening to a composition, s/he gains more and more understanding of the overall structure of the piece. While listening to the music, s/he might construct a musical paradigm appropriate for this work. And it is with the aid of this paradigm that s/he can place and interpret the events within the piece.

Although moment form "[…] uses the linearity of listening to destroy the linearity of time," as Kramer formulates it (1988: 219), and moment time tries to defeat memory, in reality it only challenges memory:

> When discontinuities seek to destroy the connectedness of successive moments, we are led to search our memories for other viable connections, which we may or may not find. Our memory of a discontinuous piece can become an unordered reconstruction of the totality of its moments and of their possible interrelationships (or lack of relationship) across absolute time. Cumulative listening enables us to appreciate moments for their contribution to the whole. (206)

Kramer here stresses the importance of repeated listening. As the listener listens more often to a particular piece, s/he might gain more insight in the music. Elements and relations, which s/he did not notice initially, because the music overwhelmed him/her, for instance, might be perceived by him/her when s/he listens to this piece more than once.

Even though Kramer stresses that genuine musical discontinuity is very hard, if not impossible to achieve, he does not deny the possibility

[12] Bear in mind that, while narrativity often implies unity, not everything that is unified is also narrative.

of absolute stasis in music. In discussing other types of musical motion, he distinguishes a type of music that he calls "vertical music" and defines it as music that consists of "[…] a single present stretched out into an enormous duration, a potentially infinite 'now' that nonetheless feels like an instant" (55). He furthermore adds that "[l]istening to a vertical musical composition can be like looking at a piece of sculpture" (57), and that "[t]he context of vertical music allows a listener to make contact with his or her own subjective temporality. It is music of subjectivity and individuality" (57). This sounds very similar to the ideals regarding absolute musical stasis Feldman had set for himself and which I discussed in the previous chapter. But, as I also have tried to show in that chapter, these ideals are close to impossible to realize. Hence, I doubt whether a listener will ever be confronted with a musical piece that s/he could consider to be a genuine vertical musical composition.

In contrast to vertical music, which supposedly is in the "now" and feels like an instant, Kramer argues that a nonlinear composition in moment time evokes a feeling of endlessness: "[A] nonlinear composition in moment time [the time sense of music that is not linear yet is still markedly discontinuous] does not really begin. Rather, it simply starts, as if it had already been going on and we happened to tune in on it" (50). Interestingly, Leonard B. Meyer notices a similar feeling when listening to the opening measures of Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart's Piano Concerto in D Minor, K. 466 (1785). He remarks that this opening sounds very ambiguous: were it not for the placement of theses measures, it would not be sure whether these indeed constitute an opening, an introduction, or an accompaniment (1956: 184). It rather sounds as if the listener is just tuning in on some music that was already playing, as Kramer puts it. However, this Concerto is everything but a nonlinear composition in moment time; it is rather a tonal, linear work with goals.

18 (watery variation) (2001), for electric guitar and tape, composed by Stephen Vitiello, is another example of a musical work which is not nonlinear in moment time, but nevertheless evokes a feeling of endlessness. This piece begins with a repetitive sound that resembles the sound of the propeller of a ship, together with a static, constant sound in which a harmonic perfect fifth can be noticed. Pitches that are producing, in a fairly irregular rhythm, melodic perfect fifths, accompany these sounds. Percussive, metallic, "industrial" sounds can also be heard, along with an oscillating, constant, very high-pitched tone. The moment the piece starts, all these sounds can be heard immediately. They are not introduced in any way or faded in, but can be heard right away at the same volume they will sound during the composition. This gives the feeling of "opening a door," or turning on the radio, and hearing something that has already been going on for an

indeterminate period of time. The end of the piece, on the other hand, is clearly marked. The sounds stop, and the guitar fades out. As a result, the piece as a whole cannot be perceived as being "endless." Only the beginning gives the listener the feeling that the music has already been going on for quite a while.

The beginning of *18 (watery variation)* not only challenges the notion of a musical beginning, but also the distinction between repetition and stasis. As I remarked in the previous chapter, both musical repetition and musical stasis are in a way problematic. Musical stasis is problematic because it is very hard, if not impossible, to achieve genuine musical stasis. Musical repetition within a composition, on the other hand, is considered problematic in musical narrativity, because it is believed that it does not have a literary or dramatic equivalent. It is argued that repetition distorts the narrative, goal-oriented linearity by returning to something that has already passed, instead of going forward.[13] However, as I argued in the previous chapter, repetition within narratives does have a counterpart in oral narration, and therefore repetition in oral storytelling can serve as an account for the occurrence of musically satisfying repetitions within musical narratives.

With regard to repetition of narratives as a whole, Brooks claims that "[n]arrative always makes the implicit claim to be in a state of repetition, as a going over again of a ground already covered: a *sjužet* [story] repeating the *fabula*, as the detective retraces the tracks of the criminal" (1982: 285). Thus, repetition is in a way inherent in narrative. A narrative implies always being in a state of repetition. The fabula is repeated in the story; the story makes possible the comprehension of the fabula. Hence, repetition of the fabula leads to its comprehension. Viewed as such, Brooks remarks, repetition in narrative resembles the Freudian notion of repetition, in which repetition is the movement from passivity to mastery (1984: 97-98). "Repetition works as a process of *binding* toward the creation of an energetic constant-state situation which will permit the emergence of mastery," Brooks asserts (101, emphasis in original).

"Binding" is a Freudian term and refers to the limiting of the free flow of energies and to the interconnecting of these energies in order to arrive at relatively stable states (Laplanche and Pontalis 1968: 221). Brooks believes that repetition of and within narrative serves a similar aim:

[13] Edward W. Said, in his book *Musical Elaborations* (1991), contends that linearity in music is a typical Western ideal, whereas in much non-Western music one strives to attain a feeling of repetition and endlessness. One could then conclude that in much non-Western music, consciously or not, musical narrativity is avoided by avoiding linearity.

> Repetition in all its literary manifestations may in fact work as a "binding," a binding of textual energies that allows them to be mastered by putting them into serviceable form, usable "bundles," within the energetic economy of the narrative. Serviceable form must, I think, mean perceptible form: repetition, repeat, recall, symmetry, all these journeys back in the text, returns to and returns of, that allow us to bind one textual moment to another in terms of similarity or substitution rather than mere contiguity. Textual energy, all that is aroused into expectancy and possibility in a text, can become usable by plot only when it has been bound or formalized. (1984: 101)

Expectation and anticipation, which according to Brooks make up textual energies, have to be bound, in the sense that it has to be possible to group them into a certain form in order to be able to handle them and to arrive at graspable narratives. In short: textual binding is the plotting of narrative; it is a structuring of expectations, anticipations, and meanings that develop through succession and time. And repetition helps in structuring these textual energies.

Can repetition in *18 (watery variation)* have a similar function? In this work, repetition within the piece starts, somewhat paradoxically, right at the beginning. The sound of the rotating ship's propeller, and the other oscillating sounds, all imply repetition. After all, oscillation is nothing else but the repetition of a certain cycle. However, if we take the equalization of oscillation and repetition seriously, we would have to conclude that all pitches actually are some kind of repetition, and thus that music consists of nothing but repetition.[14] This, in turn, would imply that stasis and repetition are identical, for a sustained tone evokes a feeling of stasis, while at the same time being a pitch, and thus a repetition of a cycle. Obviously, this would turn musical repetition into a useless notion. The question that arises thus is the following: when can we speak of musical repetition in a sensible manner? Can we say that the beginning of *18 (watery variation)* consists of repeating sounds, or is it rather a collection of static sounds, their oscillations resulting not in repetition but rather in stasis, just as in an individual pitch? Or, to rephrase the question: what is the difference between repetition within a piece and stasis?

Brooks remarks that the concept of repetition within narrative hovers ambiguously between the ideas of reproduction and change, that is, between forward and backward movement. Repetition through this ambiguity appears to suspend temporal process, or rather, "[…] to subject it to an indeterminate shuttling or oscillation that binds different moments together as a middle that might turn forward or back" (1984: 100). If we would regard repetition within a composition

[14] A pitch is defined by its frequency, which is the number of oscillating wave cycles per second.

as a suspension of temporal process, as Brooks does, then it would be very hard to tell the difference between this form of repetition and stasis, for stasis also is a suspension of temporal process (and thus of linearity and narrativity). On the other hand, in the case of repetition within a piece, this suspension is created by an oscillation between different moments. Moreover, Brooks regards repetition within narrative as a means to make connection and to understanding, "[…] to see past and present as related and as establishing a future that will be noticeable as some variation in the pattern" (99). He regards rhyme, alliteration, assonance, meter, and refrain as forms of repetition that take the reader back in the text, "[…] which allow the ear, the eye, the mind to make connections between different textual moments" (1982: 287-288). Thus, repetition within a piece connects past and present, and in so doing it creates both a suspension of temporal process, as well as a context within which future events can be interpreted. This in contrast to stasis, in which, as I argued in the previous chapter, the focus is on the "now" exclusively, thereby eliminating musical tense and thus the connection between past and present. In short: repetition within a piece is a suspension of temporal process by connecting past and present, whereas stasis is a suspension of temporal process by eliminating the connection between past, present, and future.

So, does the beginning of *18 (watery variation)* consist of repetition or stasis? As I mentioned above, the piece starts with oscillating sounds. More specifically, it consists of sounds that repeatedly fade in, stay at a constant volume for a (very) short while, and then fade out. Closures between the individual cycles of sounds thus can be noticed (the fading in and out of the sounds), and therefore we may conclude that the beginning indeed consists of a constant repetition of an event. It is a very brief event – and this may be the reason why the beginning of the piece arouses some kind of static feeling, but it nevertheless can be perceived as an actual musical event (because it can be regarded as containing a closure), which subsequently can be repeated.

Both the oscillating sounds and the percussive and melodic sounds that can be heard at the beginning of *18 (watery variation)* contribute to the linearity of the piece. There is some kind of forward motion, but the goal of that motion is not clear. In Kramer's terms, the opening of the piece is in nondirected linear time. And in more psychoanalytical terms: some kind of forward motion is aroused by the repetition of these sounds. Repetition bounds the expectations, aroused by the sounds, into a feeling of forward motion. Starting at 0'12" (as performed by David Tronzo, electric guitar, in the recording released by New Albion Records NA115), an electric guitar accompanies the other sounds by producing long, overdriven tones that almost feed back. At 0'46" a sustained synthesizer sound, in which a harmonic perfect fifth can be heard, is added, together with a pulsating, high-

pitched tone. These sounds, except for the guitar, contribute to the somewhat ambivalent character of the piece, i.e. the evoking of a feeling of stasis within a repetitive, nondirected linear context.

Incidental metallic percussive sounds can be heard at 1'12", which have an irregular rhythm. Because of this irregularity, i.e. the lack of perceptible structure or repetition, these sounds do not arouse clear expectations, which allow them to be more "free," i.e. more difficult to be bound in a more or less stable manner. As a result, these sounds add a touch of multiply-directed linear time feeling to the piece. This feeling is superseded at 1'58", when a high-pitched sound enters, although it is sustained, it nevertheless gives a strong sense of linearity to the music. Normally, sustained sounds rather evoke a feeling of stasis, since no individual events can be noticed within these sounds. This is also the case with this particular sound, but because this sound has a particular mimetic quality, it does feel linear: the sound resembles the fast winding of an audiotape. Because of this quality, the winding sound can be bound. As a result, this sound as a whole can be interpreted as a coherent whole and as implying a sense of motion, which results in a feeling of linearity.[15] From 2'40" onwards, this winding tape sound's pitch is modulated, and a melodic line is created by this modulation. Now, the sound is both linear because of its mimetic character, and multiply-directed linear because of the melody, which has a sense of direction, but not an unequivocal one. The melody does not seem to head for an explicit goal, which means that the listener cannot have clear expectations regarding the course this melody will take. Hence, the melody cannot be bound so easily. Approaching 3'01", a global sense of goal-directed linearity is evoked, because all oscillating sounds are slowly synchronized. All sounds arouse a similar expectation, for they all move toward a common frequency. Soon after this goal is attained, however, the synchronicity is again released at 3'31".

At 4'01", without any warning (i.e. without this point being anticipated as a goal), the character of the music changes, and sounds with a slightly different timbre replace the older ones. Now, too, a low oscillating sound can be heard, but it does not remind the listener of the sound of a ship's propeller anymore. The "watery" connotation is gone from this point on. It is mainly because of the oscillation that the listener can relate this part to the one s/he has previously listened to. During the remainder of the composition, incidental guitar sounds, high pitches, and xylophone-like sounds can be heard at irregular intervals, which result in a lack of clear expectations. At 5'45" a male

[15] Perhaps it even results in a feeling of goal-oriented linearity, since we expect an audiotape, which has a finite length, to be fully wound at some point. This point, then, would be the goal.

voice, uttering a short, incomprehensible sentence, appears. It seems as if the voice is speaking through an intercom, and as if the uttered sentence is some kind of announcement. Perhaps the voice is announcing the end of the piece, for, shortly after its performance, the piece ends with the guitar fading out. However, the listener can only regard the male voice at the end of the piece as the announcer of the ending after s/he has listened to the complete work. Only when s/he listens to the piece for a second, or later time, the listener might interpret the music from this point on as heading towards a definite goal. In other words: this part can only be bound after the listener has listened to the piece as a whole for two or more times. Thus, by listening repeatedly to this, or any, piece the listener might interpret it in a different way, as opposed to listening to it a single time only.

According to Brooks, repetition of a narrative can be a kind of remembering, a way of reorganizing a story whose connective links have been obscured and lost (1984: 139), which in the case of grasping the ending of *18 (watery variation)* indeed functions accordingly. He furthermore argues that a narrative has to elicit the feeling that the repetition of an entire work almost is mandatory: "It is the role of fictional plots to impose an end which yet suggests a return, a new beginning: a rereading" (109). Narratives thus have to arouse the desire to re-experience these narratives. And as I explained above, these re-experiences themselves can add to the grasp of these narratives, or more specifically, to the comprehension of the fabula.

Brooks interprets repetition within a narrative differently:

> This inescapable middle [created by repetition through the oscillation between different moments within a narrative] is suggestive of the demonic: repetition and return are perverse and difficult, interrupting simple movement forward. The relation of narrative plot to story may indeed appear to partake of the demonic, as a kind of tantalizing instinctual play, a re-enactment that encounters the magic and the curse of reproduction or "representation." (100)

Repetition within a narrative distorts its linearity. Instead, the reader is subjected to a repetition which might be interpreted as involuntary, in case the reader wants to go on reading about the next event instead of rereading past events. This leads to a feeling of what Sigmund Freud calls the demonic: a feeling which arises from involuntary repetition. A story, too, might be considered as a cause for a feeling of the demonic, since it is a reworking of the fabula. A story is a fabula that is presented in a certain manner. In a story, deviations from the chronological order as presented in the fabula can be created, as well as changes in frequency and rhythm of events in the fabula. All these modifications add to the postponement of the unfolding of the fabula,

in order to arrive at a story that is a particular representation of the fabula – but of course it is not the only possible representation; there are many, perhaps even countless, representations possible of the same fabula. For this reason, Brooks regards repetition in narration as a formalization "[…] that forces us to recognize sameness within difference, or the very emergence of a *sjužet* [story] from the material of a *fabula*" (101). This formalization creates delay in the story, in that the ultimate pleasurable discharge will be complete. When this is accomplished, we might say that an adequate representation of the fabula has been created. Thus, repetition within narrative gives aid to an adequate representation of the fabula, whereas the repetition of a narrative as a whole – i.e. the repetition of the repetitions within the narrative – leads to comprehension of the fabula.

With regard to *18 (watery variation)*, I explained that the repetition of the complete work contributes to the comprehension of the piece. It makes possible the binding of expectations that the events within the piece arouse. Yet, the question I have not yet addressed is whether this piece can be regarded as a narrative. I believe it is very doubtful that we can call *18 (watery variation)* a narrative work, because of the repetitions within the piece. Whereas, in a regular narrative, repetition is used to delay the unfolding of the fabula, in this composition any unfolding or development is obscured by repetition. Except for the fragment starting at 3'01", where the different repetitions gradually become synchronized, and the appearance of the voice at 5'45", the events that make up the composition do not really suggest a development. There is only a sudden change of musical character at 4'01" and a more or less anticipated ending of the piece. The beginning, too, is sudden, and does not behave at all like a beginning or start of a development. Rather, it sounds like a repetition that has been going on for an indeterminate length of time, a repetition that the listener just happens to tune in to. All this contributes to the impossibility of distilling a fabula out of the composition. Thus, despite the local representations of temporal developments which lead to the identification of musical events, and the possibilities for binding that are established through repetition within *18 (watery variation)*, this repetition is not a means to postpone the unfolding of a fabula, but is rather the replacement of a fabula; repetition is the theme of the piece.

The Use of an Ending

Despite the fact that I ultimately concluded that *18 (watery variation)* cannot be regarded as a narrative, I could not tell for sure whether this piece was narrative while listening to it for the first time. As Pasler asserts: "[N]arrative is the sense that one has of a certain kind of a

whole when one has reached the end, not necessarily while one is listening to each and every part in its middle" (1989: 252). So, although I ultimately came to the conclusion that *18 (watery variation)* is not narrative, the fact that I did or did not have the impression that the piece was narrative while listening to it is not crucial to the labelling of a composition as being narrative or not. "It is at the end […] that recognition brings its illumination, which then can shed retrospective light" (Brooks 1982: 282). Only when the listener has heard everything can s/he interpret the events of the piece within its proper context. Or, as Wolfram Ette asserts:

> The present cannot be understood as heading for the future, but rather is understood from the viewpoint of the future. The basic relation that is paramount here is that between the present and the end of the work. The awareness of the fact that the work ultimately ends and returns to the silence it arose from is crucial to the listening experience itself.[16]

Ette argues that, although the present can, and will, create expectations with regard to the future, in the end (no pun intended) a listener can only fully interpret musical events retrospectively. And finally, all these events are interpreted with the knowledge that the music will turn silent as the work ends.

Ette's argument resonates within my elaboration of musical tense, as was done in the previous chapter. There, I explained that the act of uttering a succession of sounds takes place in the present, as music always unfolds itself in the present. This present cannot be grasped at the moment it is sounding; the present rather is the moment in which music presents itself as a continuous stream of sounds. Only in relation to the musical past, the time in which music is regarded as consisting of discrete musical events, can the music be grasped. As a result, music is always interpreted after the fact, and thus the present can only be understood from the viewpoint of the future. Moreover, music can only make sense because it has an ending, as Luckner contends:

> In musical rhythm – regarded as an audible model of the act of coordination done by the mind – the tones, which are, when taken separately, abstract and finite, are related to each other in such a way that they become part of larger units, and ultimately become forms of movement. In order to achieve this, the fading out of the tones is almost mandatory: there would be no rhythm if

[16] "Die Gegenwart wird nicht als auf die Zukunft zutreibend, sondern von der Zukunft her verstanden. Die elementare Beziehung, die hier eine Rolle spielt, ist die zum Ende des Werks […] Das Bewußtsein, daß das Werk endet und zurücksinkt in das Schweigen, aus dem es kam, ist für die Hörerfahrung selbst zentral." (Ette 2000: 157, my translation)

> the tones would not be finite, just as the moving form necessarily manifests itself in time as being momentary and provisional.[17]

Notes, phrases, and entire compositions have to be finite. If not, there would be no closures, and thus no discrete events, and ultimately no musical grasp. The listener can only make sense of the music in relation to the musical past, the time in which the music is regarded as consisting of discrete musical events. Endless music has no ending, obviously, and thus is not discrete, either. To paraphrase Brouwer: one cannot grasp actual infinity, and therefore infinite music is ungraspable as well.

In literature, too, infinity and meaning are incompatible, as Brooks observes:

> The very possibility of meaning plotted through sequence and through time depends on the anticipated structuring force of the ending: the interminable would be the meaningless, and the lack of ending would jeopardize the beginning. We read the incidents of narration as "promises and annunciations" of final coherence, that metaphor that may be reached through the chain of metonymies: across the bulk of the as yet unread middle pages, the end calls to the beginning, transforms and enhances it […] We might say that we are able to read present moments – in literature and, by extension, in life – as endowed with narrative meaning only because we read them in anticipation of the structuring power of those endings that will retrospectively give them the order and significance of plot. (1984: 93-94)

Plotting, the activity of distilling structure and meaning from a text while reading it, is possible because the reader knows there will be an ending. The meaning of the middle pages is in part determined by the knowledge that the text is finite and that it is coherent to a certain extent. The reader expects the concatenation of events – a metonymic relation – that are represented in the text to lead to some kind of overall meaning of the text – the resulting metaphor. As a consequence, the end influences the manner in which the beginning is interpreted. Moreover, the reader recognizes a beginning because s/he knows there will be an ending: "The sense of beginning, then, is determined by the sense of an ending" (Brooks 1982: 283). As I remarked earlier, *18 (watery variation)* does not really have a beginning, but seems to have been going on indefinitely before the listener happened to tune in on it.

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[17] "Im musikalischen Rhythmus – als einem hörbaren Modell der Koordinierungstätigkeit des Geistes – sind die für sich allein genommenen abstrakten und endlichen Töne so aufeinander bezogen, daß sie zu Teilen größerer Einheiten, eben Bewegungsformen werden. Hierfür ist das Verklingen der Töne geradezu Bedingung: Es gäbe keinen Rhythmus, wenn die Töne nicht endlich wären, wie auch umgekehrt die Bewegungsform sich notwendig in der Zeit und nur so manifestiert, daß die Form momentan und provisorisch ist." (Luckner 2000: 129, my translation)

The listener can label this moment as a beginning, though; only once s/he has heard the ending. Then, in retrospect, s/he might conclude that the moment s/he tuned into the piece really was the beginning.

Each piece of music starts at some point, and this beginning arouses the desire to listen to it, from the beginning onwards. The beginning elicits desire, the desire to hear a piece of music and to hear it until the ending of the work. To paraphrase Brooks, the beginning is desire, and this desire ultimately is the desire for the end (284). With regard to beginning and ending, Brooks recognizes a parallel between narration and life: "All narration is obituary," he contends, "in that life acquires definable meaning only at, and through, death" (284). Life is finite, and because it is finite, and thus has an end, it has meaning. Hence, death is the final reason life makes sense. Yet, the human subject is not supposed to achieve this ultimate meaning-giving moment too soon, Brooks writes in reference to Freud:

> [T]he self-preservative instincts function to assure that the organism shall follow its own path to death, to ward off any ways of returning to the inorganic which are not immanent to the organism itself. In other words, "the organism wishes to die only in its own fashion." It must struggle against events (dangers) which would help it to achieve its goal too rapidly – by a kind of short-circuit. (290-291)

Living organisms instinctively head towards death, but only in a way that is proper to them. So, it must not be reached too quickly, and neither in a way which does not suit them.

This drive toward the end, the Freudian death instinct, operates in the text through repetition and deviation. Repetition and deviation ensure that human subjects do not reach the end too soon, that there is some kind of tension between progression and stasis. Yet, the textual energy in narrative stems from the narrative being always on the verge of premature discharge, of short-circuit. Because of this, the reader experiences the fear – and excitation – of the improper end (296). Detours are necessary to facilitate the right end, to avoid short-circuit and reaching the end prematurely (1984: 103-104). However, as I explained in relation to *18 (watery variation)*, a narrative can only contain a maximum amount of detours. Too many detours may obscure the end it originally was heading for. Therefore,

> […] the desire of the text (the desire of reading [or listening]) is hence desire for the end, but desire for the end reached only through the at least minimally complicated *detour*, the intentional deviance, in tension. (Brooks 1982: 292, emphasis in original)

But despite its detours, Brooks concludes, narrative desire remains contradictive, because its fulfillment would be both its destruction and its meaning (1984: 58).

Ette recognizes a parallel between the finiteness of life and of music, in which birth and death also play a major role. The beginning and ending of human lives are both present and absent in the human subject; s/he can never really experience his/her own beginning and ending, but only experiences "symptoms" that point to his/her birth and death. In music, on the other hand, the listener can really grasp the beginning and the ending. The start of a musical work does slip back into the past and the final moments of the piece are anticipated in some future, just as it is in real life. Yet, the listener can consciously experience this beginning and ending, in contrast to the listener's own lives. Therefore, Ette concludes, in musical experience the listener contemplates his/her life more or less from the outside (2000: 154-155). But, we might reply, is this then the case in all temporal, finite experiences human subjects have? After all, each one of these experiences has a beginning and an ending that one can consciously undergo. So, what is so special about music that stimulates the listener to contemplate his/her life while listening to it?

Christa Widlund tries to answer this question. She contends that music has its roots in primary process thinking, i.e. the thinking, feeling, and experiencing as the human subject does in his/her early infancy. Ruth Mätzler explains that the human subject's sensitivity to music stems from the time s/he has spent in the mother's womb before s/he was born:

> It seem to be possible to connect music to modes of perception, which have started even before birth in the body of the mother, a body which itself is a resonant body. It is not just the melody of the mother's voice, which the unborn child can perceive through vibrations, but also the numerous noises within the body itself, such as the rhythm of the heart and of breathing.[18]

Since, in contrast to vision, the unborn child is exposed to sounds, Mätzler contends, human subjects have a certain sensibility with regard to sounds, and thus to music, that differs from the other senses. And because music refers back to the time human subjects, as pre-infants, spent in the mother's womb, Widlund believes that music brings the listener back to a mode of reliving his/her infancy, characterized by passivity and an overflowing of emotions, a condition in which the

[18] "Es scheint möglich zu sein, mit Musik an Erlebnisweisen anzuknüpfen, die bereits vor der Geburt im Körper der Mutter, beginnen, der ja auch ein Resonanzkörper ist. Es ist nicht nur die Melodie der Stimme, die das ungeborene Kind mittels Schwingungen wahrnimmt, sondern auch ihre vielfältigen innerkörperlichen Geräusche, wie z.B. der Rhythmus des Herzens und der Atmung." (Mätzler 2002: 6, my translation)

things could not yet be named. This, she continues, might as well be the power of music: "music activates the unspeakable, lost experiences, and at the same time shows that these experiences can be controlled and expressed, which makes that we do not become submerged in chaos."[19] Widlund's thesis is that listening to music helps the human subject to face his/her own finiteness. Listening to music is practicing to die. The reason music can do this far better than, say, a (finite) tennis match, is because music can activate the human subject's most essential and intense feelings. Moreover, it can frame these feelings in a manner that shows that they can be controlled and this might lead to consolidation (1992: 10). Thus, because music harks back to the time the human subject spent in the mother's womb, and shows that the unspeakable events s/he underwent can be controlled, Widlund believes music, in contrast to other temporal experiences, can do the same with human feelings and apprehensions regarding death.

Widlund and Ette are arguing along the lines of Brooks's view regarding the relation between death and narrative. He argues that it is death that provides the reader the very "authority," as he calls it, of the tale in narrative, "[…] since as readers we seek in narrative fictions the knowledge of death which in our own lives is denied to us" (1984: 95). So, just like music, narrative fiction might provide the subject with "information," or, perhaps more accurately, emotions, regarding his/her own death, which life itself will never provide. The way in which music and narrative fiction might offer these sensations differs, though. Music can provide the listener with these sensations because it can control unspeakable experiences, whereas narrative fiction can offer the promise of "[…] a significant retrospect, a summing-up, the coming to completion of a fully predicated, and readable, sentence" (96). Fiction thus might present death as a sensible completion of a meaningful life, a completion that all human subjects want to reach, but which has to be reached in their own proper, delayed manner.

In narrative, either verbal or musical, the forward motion that takes the observing subject from beginning to end has to be tempered in order to avoid short-circuited and improper endings. At the same time, these delays heighten tension, since in that case the fulfillment of expectation, namely the reaching of the end, is delayed. And just as instant gratification annihilates desire, the postponement of fulfillment enhances desire. Musical tense makes possible the detours that postpone the ending, while at the same time making sure that the listener can interpret these detours as delays. As a result, musical tense, which I characterized in the previous chapter as a necessary condition

[19] "[M]uziek activeert de onzegbare, verloren belevingen en laat tegelijkertijd zien dat die beheerst en geuit kunnen worden, zodat we niet in de chaos verzinken." (Widlund 1992: 3, my translation)

for music in order to be narrative, is also a necessary condition for the arousal of musical desire.

Both musical and verbal narrative can give the impression that it is moving in a certain direction and that it is heading for a certain end. In order for music to elicit this impression during the listening, the listener must be able to plot his/her way through the music, i.e. be able to structure the music and distill some kind of meaning from it. This is only possible because of musical tense; would the music lack tense, then the listener has no opportunity to reflect on the music. However, as I contended above, music without tense is close to impossible. As a result, it is always possible to reflect on the music, but this does not automatically imply that the music is also always narrative.

Because of musical tense, music perception can be made discursive. Musical tense makes talking about musical experiences possible. Because of this, the listener can label a musical fragment as, say, being linear or nonlinear. But what exactly does it mean to make something, say, listening to a musical piece, into something that can be communicated? Ultimately, it means that the listener has created a representation of it. It is through representations that human subjects communicate, and narrative is one such form a representation can take.

By creating a representation, some distance with respect to the original experience is created as well. When I give an account of, say, the presence and absence of goal-directedness in Ligeti's *Ten Pieces for Wind Quintet*, one might understand what I mean, but one does not actually undergo this goal-directedness. To tell about goal-directedness, or desire for the end, or repetition, in music is not the same as actually experiencing it. Yet, as I argued in the previous chapter, I am convinced that a verbal account of a musical experience can be an enrichment: it can enrich both our understanding of music and the listener's future musical experiences. Likewise, a narrative interpretation of a musical piece is on the one hand necessarily a reduction, but on the other hand it might be a valuable addition to the possible modes of listening to that piece.

Perhaps the element of a musical experience which is the most difficult to convey in a verbal account is musical emotion. Yet, according to Tarasti, musical narrativity emerges precisely from a series of emotions that are caused by the music itself. This would imply that musical emotion is a key ingredient in musical narrativity. In the next chapter I will examine to what extent Tarasti's account of musical narrativity is compatible with mine. In addition, I will investigate whether a listener can comprehend a musical piece that on the one hand elicits narrativity, but on the other hand frustrates the possibility of narrativity.

5 MOVED

A Psychoanalytical Perspective on Music

Somehow, music seems to possess the power to touch the listener emotionally. But this is the case with whatever kind of music, narrative or not. Musical emotions do not seem to be constitutive of the emergence of musical narrativity in particular. Yet, Tarasti believes otherwise. He argues that "[…] musical narrativity emerges precisely from a series of emotions (caused by the music itself)" (1994: 74). In his view, musical narrativity is the result of a concatenation of emotions that are caused by the music that is listened to. This would imply that emotion, or affect, is a necessary ingredient in musical narrativity. More accurately, Tarasti regards this series of emotions as the sole cause of musical narrativity. At first sight, this account of musical narrativity seems to be incompatible with mine. As I elaborated in chapter 2, I define narrativity as the representation of a temporal development, and many musical works comply with this definition. Furthermore, I argued that, during the listening to a composition, the listener has certain expectations about the direction the music will take, and these expectations are either met or not. This amounts to a feeling of tension and resolution while listening, and the interplay of tension and resolution leads to the representation of a temporal development, and might ultimately lead to musical narrativity. Musical tension and resolution, and thus musical narrativity, can only be perceived because of musical tense. Only because the listener can distinguish musical events within the continuum of sounds by which the music presents itself, can s/he perceive musical tension and resolution. This distinction, and ultimately musical narrativity, is made possible because of musical tense. Note that I have not incorporated affect or emotion in my elaboration of musical narrativity, and thus my account seems to have nothing in common with Tarasti's. However, as I will argue in this chapter, our respective accounts are more alike than they may initially seem.

Psychoanalysis might be an appropriate means to demonstrate that Tarasti's account and mine are compatible. "Psychoanalysis," Bal and Norman Bryson remark, "is a mode of reading the unconscious and its relationship to expression, and as such it is semiotic theory" (1991: 195). Semiotics is the study of signs, with signs being objects, utterances, or even thoughts, which stand for something to somebody in some respect. Human expression, which for instance can take the form of an artistic utterance, can be regarded as a sign that stands for

some conscious or unconscious state of mind. It is the relation between these signs and the mental states they might stand for that is studied in psychoanalysis. But we do not want to reconstruct the state of mind of the producer of an artwork, which is a specific form of human expression, nor predict the way in which the observer of an artwork will be affected by it when incorporating psychoanalytical methods into our analysis of that artwork. According to Bal and Bryson, the point of psychoanalysis here is "[…] neither the diagnosis of a psyche, nor its contribution to the interpretation itself, but the possibility it offers to gain access to issues of visual art" (197). In the same vain, I assert that psychoanalysis can gain access to musical issues, too.

Bal and Bryson distinguish three basic methodological models when applying psychoanalysis to art: the analogical model, the specification model, and the hermeneutic model. The analogical model is based on an assumed analogy between the processes and products of the practices of psychoanalysis and art. Bal and Bryson remark that the use of this model does not protect the work against arbitrary interpretations, for, in this model, the theory and its interpretive schemas are taken "[…] as a whole, as a story in themselves, which is superimposed on the work" (196). According to Bal and Bryson, this leads up to allegory, which is "[…] a flight away from the signifier toward an elusive, logocentric meaning outside" (196).

The other two methodological models are less problematic than the analogical model, partly because these models do not imply the projection of narratives onto the artwork. In the specification model, psychoanalysis is used as a searchlight theory, allowing specific features of the work to be illuminated. The goal is not to confirm the psychoanalytic content of the material, but "[…] to make explicit in what ways the presumed subject exposes itself as existing through various psychoanalytically theorized problems" (197). This model does not try to give some kind of allegorical reading of an artwork, which results in a reduction of the work, but expands the meaning of the work by giving an interpretation that can be regarded as an addition to other interpretations, rather than a replacement. The hermeneutic model, lastly, does not use the content of psychoanalysis to inform the work but, instead, "[…] draws upon psychoanalytic assumptions and axioms such as its theorization of repression, its views on semiosis, and its theory of the subject, and it uses these as descriptive concepts" (197). This approach focuses on traces of the unconscious and the manner in which these disturb or influence the interpretation of an artwork that in itself might seem coherent.

Nonetheless, Pinchas Noy remains rather skeptical about the application of psychoanalysis to art:

> [M]ost of what is regarded today as "psychoanalytic interpretation of art" is based on the tacit assumption that meanings are always related to a narrative, and the function of interpretation is therefore to reconstruct the hidden narrative line out of its unconscious symbolizations, displacements, condensations, and other distortions. The problem is that such an approach is justified only in the case of interpreting *content*, but not for interpretating [sic] *form*. Although we know that form too may represent in some cases an unconscious content, in other cases it may represent nothing beyond itself. If so, perhaps many of the interpretations that assign varieties of latent meaning to elements of form are nothing more than the projections of the creative imagination of the interpreter himself. (1993: 125-126, emphasis in original)

Noy argues that many psychoanalytic analyses of artworks consist of the projection of narratives – created out of psychoanalytic theories – onto the work. In this way, the artwork is forced to fit into a certain theoretical mold, regardless of whether this mold is suited to interpret this particular artwork.[1] Noy remarks that especially form is unsuited to be analyzed in this way, while the content of an artwork can be fit into this theoretical mold. This remark is particularly important in the case of music, since music is considered by many to consist of nothing else but moving, sounding form. When we would take this view on music, that was originally formulated by Eduard Hanslick (1854), seriously, then psychoanalysis can be of no help in the analysis of music.

However, two questions arise: (1) Is it really the case that form cannot be analyzed in a psychoanalytical fashion? (2) Is music indeed nothing more than moving, sounding form? To answer the second question first: music can be interpreted as consisting of more than just form, as numerous analyses of musical works by, for instance, Abbate, Fink, and Tarasti, have shown. In contrast to Noy's argument, it is possible to articulate some kind of musical meaning through the analysis of musical form. The listener's appreciation of music does not end with the admiration of its temporal organization, i.e. its form. As I argued in chapter 1, an important aspect of musical listening experiences is grasping the form of music – next to the recognition of sounds as musical sounds. But a musical listening experience also consists of relating the music to extramusical phenomena, which already is more than exclusively appreciating musical form.

Besides, Hanslick's contention does not exclude the possibility of musical narrativity. A moving form also can be a representation of a temporal development, and thus comply with the working definition of narrative. Moreover, many, if not all the narrative elements I have

[1] This criticism is similar to mine with regard to an exclusively anthropomorphic interpretation of music, as I elaborated in chapter 2.

discussed in chapter 2 are related to formal musical characteristics. But the regarding of music as narrative does not end here. As I argued in chapter 2, music does not really move. Rather, this movement is represented by the succession of sounds. Thus, the musical moving form is the result of a representation. Next, this form can, and most probably will, itself be interpreted again, namely as an interplay of tension and resolution. And this interplay, too, can be interpreted.[2] A psychoanalytic analysis of this interplay would not be less justified than the psychoanalytical analysis of some content. Moreover, what kind of musical content would a listener be left with if one would disregard musical form? After all, this form is articulated by the succession of sounds. Content is always mediated by form. But if the listener does not pay any attention to musical form, there remains very little that could be considered as a relevant aspect of musical sound, and which would constitute some content that the listener can focus on. The only aspect that would be left are the sounds themselves, as they are, isolated and atemporal. This, of course, might in itself be a valuable manner of music appreciation, but it implies that musical temporality is ignored. For if we would relate these sounds temporally, we would again create a musical form. Therefore, besides these isolated atemporal sounds, musical form is the only available musical content that can be analyzed. Access to the music, regarded as a more or less structured whole, can only be gained through its form. As a result, music is sounding moving form, but analysis does not end with merely describing this form. Musical form can itself be interpreted again (whereas the interpretation of this form can be interpreted as well, and the interpretation of this interpretation, *ad infinitum*), in order to attribute some kind of meaning, emotional or otherwise, to it, and thus surpassing the level of appreciation of musical form only. With this remark, I can formulate an answer to the first question I posed above: musical form, which in the end is more than just sounding moving form and which can lead to musical narrativity, indeed can be analyzed in a psychoanalytical manner.

The Affected Listener

Gilbert J. Rose gives the following explanation of the emotive power that many artworks seem to possess:

> Perhaps the broadest definition of an expressive artistic form is that it consists of a symmetrical resolution of opposing forces of tension and resolution […] An idea of fundamental importance because of its bridging nature is that these same forces of tension and resolution already exist in

[2] This is in line with Peirce's semiotic theory. Peirce regards a sign as something that stands for some object and that can be interpreted. This interpretation, the so-called interpretant, can itself function as a sign that can be interpreted again.

> perception itself. There they constitute the expressive quality of perception – the capacity to perceive with feeling. (1993: 68)

One can be touched emotionally while perceiving something, Rose argues, because in perception, forces of tension and resolution can be identified. Human perception is intertwined with the satisfaction that the subject experiences in his/her temporal anticipations and expectations, and the fulfillment of these expectations. This fulfillment (i.e. resolution), or lack of fulfillment (i.e. tension), evokes sensations of pleasure/unpleasure.[3]

The (emotional) reaction to perception depends largely on the perceiving subject's personal memory and experiences, Rose remarks:

> The response to any stimulus will depend in large measure on the conscious and unconscious ideation, memories, images provoked by the stimulus – its cognitive meaning in the light of past experience. But for there to be an emotional response of any significant degree, pleasure/unpleasure sensations must be involved. (73)

Thus, the human subject reacts emotionally on perceptions when pleasure/unpleasure sensations are involved, and these sensations in turn are dependent on tension and resolution, as well as on his/her personal memory and experiences.[4]

Musical structure is based on the interplay of tension and resolution, too; namely on the recognition of musical events and closures, a recognition that involves this interplay. This is in line with Rose's view, for he concludes that in music, too, degrees of tension and resolution underlie the sensations of pleasure/unpleasure, which in turn constitute emotional reactions (73-74). Music, and art in general, consists of structures which have themselves been created in such a way as to explore, or even exploit, the tension and resolution inherent in ordinary perceptual experience. All thought and perception is accompanied by an interplay of tension and resolution, while this interplay is in part determined by the perceiving subject's knowledge of reality and personal experiences. An interplay of tension and resolution in perception accounts for an elementary biological aspect of

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[3] This account can be related to the way musical meaning emerges, which I explained in chapter 3: a musical event becomes meaningful because it is related to other musical events within a context in such a way that this event is the marked term. An event is marked because it stands out in the music, i.e. that is considered as tense in relation to its context. As a consequence, meaning – as a result of markedness – and pleasure/unpleasure – evoked by the interplay of expectation and (lack of) fulfillment – are established in a similar fashion.

[4] Moreover, the recognition of tension and resolution depends on the individual listener, too. As I argued in chapter 2, music is not physically tense or resolved. Rather, it is the listener who interprets musical events as wanting to lead to other events.

perception, i.e. the capacity to perceive with feeling. Since music, too, is based on the interplay of tension and resolution, there is a correspondence in type of structure between the opposing forces of tension and resolution in music and in perception. As a result, it is to be expected that these forces are also constitutive of the emotional qualities of music.

David Epstein argues that music deals with a fundamental aspect of the subject's humanity; the need to organize the passage of time. Music that speaks to this innateness arouses, according to Epstein, a deep fulfillment:

> [The] various modes by which our innate sense of periodicity is played with exert affective effect. In their special ways, they deal with this fundamental aspect of our humanity – our need to organize the passage of time, and with a physiology has evolved in a way that makes this organization possible. Music that speaks to this innateness, which deals congruently with these propensities is, not surprisingly, a deep fulfillment. Obviously this congruence enjoys a broad spectrum of means. All of them play with our expectations, and ultimately, respect them. The satisfaction that results complements those other aspects of affect that deal with musical symbolism, and through it, probe our inner states of being. (1993: 121-122)

Epstein furthermore claims that motion has long been recognized as a prime component of musical feeling (100). He concludes that musical motion thus has to be intimately tied to musical affect:

> It is motion, with its correlated affect, that makes ultimate sense of the music, the nature of its flow – in brief, how it will "go." In this respect, motion subsumes, integrates, and provides the broadest context for all other musical elements. (101)

Epstein does not elaborate why exactly this is so, but when we relate his contention to Rose's account of emotive perception and to my account of musical tense, it is possible to give an explanation. Music is some kind of organization of the passage of time, and this organization has been made perceptible precisely because music is based on a structure of tension and resolution, for the passage of time is marked by moments of tension and resolution. Therefore, it is because of the interplay of tension and resolution (and thus because of musical tense) that musical motion can be perceived at all. Musical motion and tension/resolution are two sides of the same coin. As a result, the relation between musical motion and the listener's emotional response to music can be explained, since it is the interplay of tension and resolution that is responsible for both the listener's capacity to perceive with feeling and the possibility of perceiving musical motion.

In Epstein's view, music embodies a fusion of affective qualities and musical structures, which are often symbolic. He admits that we cannot and need not describe, by means of language, the feelings evoked by the music. Furthermore, Epstein claims that the affect of the artwork is unique, impervious to translation across media. He does not regard translation as a necessity, though. What he wants to understand is in what way motion in music is responsible for the affective qualities of the music (119). My contention is that music has these qualities because tension/resolution and motion are necessarily related to each other. Epstein, however, does not discuss this possible explanation. He only argues that, if we would investigate the musical symbols that are responsible for the emotional response the listener gives, we would enhance our knowledge of affects (100).

Epstein derives his account of musical affect from Suzanne Langer's remarks. Music, she suggests, can articulate with clarity and precision subtle complexes of feeling that language, for all its denotative power, cannot even name: "A composer not only indicates, but *articulates* subtle complexes of feeling that language cannot even name, let alone set forth; he knows the forms of emotion and can handle them, 'compose' them" (1976: 222, emphasis in original). Therefore, Epstein concludes, "[…] music, in its affective connotations, provides a symbolic representation of an inner state" (1993: 96). Here, Epstein seems to suggest that music can represent human feelings. In other words: the listener recognizes emotions that are actually represented by the music. If he indeed does suggest this, then music is more denotative than he claims it is. After all, he seems to argue that the listener can read the emotions that are represented musically. However, I prefer to understand an inner state as being aroused in the listener by the music, without the need of this state actually being represented by the music. Hence, the representation of emotion in music is not necessary in order to establish a relation between music and emotion.

The fact that Epstein follows Langer in regarding music as a symbolic representation of an inner state has important consequences for his view on the relation between affect and contemporary, atonal musical compositions. Because this kind of music does not make use of traditional harmony and melody, Epstein concludes that no specific affective connotations exist (119). Atonal musical compositions create their own idiosyncratic universe and they do not make use of established musical conventions. To use the terminology I introduced in chapter 3: these musical works do not correlate to style types, and musical paradigms have to be created anew for each of these kinds of pieces. Therefore, Epstein concludes that contemporary music cannot represent emotional states that subsequently can be recognized by the listener. This is consistent with his account of the relation between music and emotion, but implies that the listener cannot be touched

emotionally by this kind of music. Only music that uses traditional tonal harmony can be emotional, Epstein seems to contend. The view that an inner emotional state is aroused within the listener by the music because of its movement, without the need of this inner state really being represented by the music, on the other hand, does not imply this. In this view, music does not have to represent some emotion that the listener subsequently recognizes, and this allows contemporary music to be able to cause emotional reactions, too.

Epstein, for his part, seems to regard musical representations as actual representations of affect, rather than as signs that arouse affective states performatively. Moreover, he claims that our insight into affective states, caused by the music, may be more precisely grasped if we can determine the nature of musical symbolism itself (96). This nature has to be found in musical motion, for it is this characteristic of music that is responsible for arousing musical feeling.

If Epstein is implying that affect can somehow be located in the musical symbol itself – which he does not explicitly state, but which he seems to imply by suggesting a relation between the nature of musical symbolism and the nature of affective states – then his account is at odds with Isobel Armstrong's, who follows Freud's conception of affect. She explains that affect is a triple combination of bodily discharge, perception of that motor action and a qualitative assessment of pleasure or pain, held together by an indefinable "core" experience (2000: 110). Emotions, feelings, passions, moods, anxiety, discharge of psychic energy, motor innervation, pleasure, pain, joy, sorrow, rapture, and depression are all affects, Armstrong remarks. She differentiates between these affects and does not regard them to be similar (108). Nevertheless, while referring to Freud, Armstrong does argue that every affect includes both particular motor discharges and certain feelings. These feelings are both direct feelings of pleasure and unpleasure related to the affect, perception and interpretation of those feelings:

> An affect includes in the first place particular motor innervations or discharges and secondly certain feelings; the latter are of two kinds – perception of the feelings that have occurred and the direct feelings of pleasure and unpleasure which, as we say, give the affect its keynote. But I do not think that with this enumeration we have arrived at the essence of affect. We seem to see deeper in the case of some affects and to recognize that the core which holds the combination we have described together is the reception of some particular significant experience. (Freud, as quoted in Armstrong 2000: 110)

In short: affect is both a bodily reaction and the interpretation of this reaction. As a consequence, because of its bodily aspect, affect cannot be a characteristic of the artwork itself.

But art, in a sense, can act as a temporal suspension of the feeling of being out of control that is associated with affect. Some artworks can be interpreted as representing situations that can be characterized as being affective, and which are subsequently resolved. In this way, the artwork might give the impression that such situations and the related emotions can be overcome. Yet, Armstrong argues, this kind of representation is subject to a paradox, for successful representation annihilates affect:

> The poem as successful triumph over depression is the defeat of affect […] Achieved language, betokening separation from the mother, the matricide which summons language because separation enables language to stand in for the lost object, engenders symbol-making but represses affect as a necessary outcome of its success. It has achieved the work of full representation rather than what Hanna Segal called the search for a primitive equivalent of experience, an equivalent which would be a kind of quasi-object, not a symbol. (112)

Artworks might for instance stand in for a lost object, a loss that is the cause of, for instance, grief. These symbols might then heal the grief in a certain sense (at least within the context of the representation), but at the same time it represses affect. Now it functions as a full representation rather than as an equivalent of experience. Such an equivalent, Armstrong concludes, cannot be a symbol. Affect is a kind of energy and bodily discharge, which cannot be fully captured symbolically. At most, representations can be an impetus for an affective reaction. Or, as Rose puts it, "[…] human emotion cannot exist embedded in the inorganic structure of aesthetic form. The structure can only offer the necessary perceptual conditions for an emotional response to occur" (1993: 71).

Ludwig Haesler follows Armstrong in contending that music is an object that can fill the gap, created by the separation of one person from another. However, as I will explain below, he has a conception of affect, which is in conflict with both Armstrong's and Rose's account of affect. Haesler defines "object" as the relational aspect of specific forms of involvement with another person, including the affective interchange with that person. Object is the term for an internalized experiential structure, including the specific complex affective modes and patterns of experiencing and of relating and interacting with another person (1992: 32). These objects are formed by fantasizing, and subsequently are projected onto outer material things to represent them. In this way, a person may fill the gap that has been created in the course of having to realize the not being with one another. This gap comes to the fore when experiencing the loss of unity with the other longed and sought for, originally with the mother. To compensate for

this loss, a sort of substitute is formed in a fantasy, allowing it to recreate, dominate and master, in an illusionary manner, what is absent in reality, including the whole spectrum of affective implications of this process. Following Donald W. Winnicott, Haesler calls those objects that are meant to fill this gap in this specific manner transitional objects. These are mainly formed in a specific developmental phase during infancy, although the transitional object will continue functioning well into adulthood. Haesler argues that they form "[…] the basis of creative fantasy, of play, artistic creativity, creative playful thinking, of philosophical and religious thinking in later life" (33).

Since, according to Haesler, musical and affective semantics are intimately related to each other, music can have the quality and function of such an object:

> Musical and affective semantics are […], being born from the same matrix, intimately related to each other so that […] music may well acquire, by its specific sensual structure and quality, the dynamic quality and function of an object, by representing within and through its specific semantic structures of iconical, indexical and symbolical qualities the specific affective semantical structures and qualities of the dynamical mutual interchange between the evolving self and object. (36-37)

Because Haesler maintains that something like an affective semantic structure can be articulated, his account of affect is at odds with Armstrong's. Armstrong regards affect as both a bodily reaction and the interpretation of this reaction. Therefore, affect cannot be a characteristic of a (musical or other kind of) symbol. Yet, by relating the terms "semantic" and "structure" to affect, Haesler does imply that affects can be such a characteristic.

As I argued before, music is not primarily a symbolic representation of an inner state. Instead, an inner state is aroused in the listener by the music, without the need, or, more accurately, the possibility, of this inner state really being represented by the music. It might be possible that music can function as an object that fills a gap that is created by the separation of one person from another. However, this is not because musical and affective semantic structures are intimately related to each other. It is impossible to speak of affective semantic structures. Because the human subject can interpret affects, some kind of meaning, and thus semantics, can be attributed to affect. But the affect underlying this meaning cannot be fully articulated in any structured (or unstructured) manner in music or otherwise, because of the bodily aspect of affect. Rather, music can function as a transitional object because it can be interpreted as representing situations that can be characterized as being affective, and which are subsequently

resolved.[5] But, as Armstrong argues, this means that affect is annihilated. As a result, music, through its interplay of tension and resolution, can arouse affect, while it is impossible to speak of affect as a proper characteristic of music itself.

How does all this relate to Tarasti's account of musical narrativity? As I explained at the beginning of this chapter, he holds that musical narrativity emerges precisely from a series of emotions, which are caused by the music itself. In the preceding discussion I concluded that one of the reasons that affective responses are aroused in the listener is because music is based on a structure of tension and resolution. It is the fulfillment or lack of fulfillment of anticipations, aroused by the interplay of tension and resolution that can cause sensations of pleasure/unpleasure. This interplay is an index for musical tense, i.e. the possibility of discerning discrete events within the continuum of sounds. It is because of the recognition of discrete events that the music can evoke some sense of linearity and goal-directedness, which is the result of the listener's perception of an interplay of tension and resolution, and reacts affectively to music. At the same time, the interplay of tension and resolution leads to the representation of a temporal development, and might ultimately result in musical narrativity. Thus, in the end, both musical narrativity and affective responses to music can be caused by the same phenomenon, i.e. the interplay of tension and resolution. As a consequence, Tarasti's account of musical narrativity is not as remote from mine as it may seem; the same cause underlies both accounts.

Traumatic Listening?

The listener can be affected by music because of the interplay of musical tension and resolution, which might result in the music's linearity and goal-directedness. One of the reasons that a listener wants to listen to music might be because s/he knows it can affect him/her. But does this also mean that s/he has a compulsion to listen to music, because of the relation between affect and musical linearity and goal-directedness? Is this relation the cause of the desire that makes the listener want to listen further?

If it is really only musical affect that the listener is longing for when listening to music, then we can conclude that it is not only because of the relation between affect and musical linearity and goal-directedness that s/he wants to listen to music. After all, the interplay of tension and resolution is just one of the possible ways in which music can arouse affect. A composition that does not show a predominant linearity or

[5] Thus, music can be interpreted as representing something, but music cannot be seen as a symbolic representation with a more or less fixed meaning, as Haesler seems to imply by regarding semantics as a property of musical representation.

goal-directedness – no inclination to head towards an end – is not automatically unpleasurable to listen to. If this were the case, then we could even conclude that listening to all non-narrative music would be unpleasurable. Therefore, we cannot conclude that listening to music, which is not linear or goal-directed, is not pleasurable at all. Moreover, the interplay of tension and resolution does not necessarily have to lead to music that is predominantly linear and goal-directed, although linearity and goal-directedness always imply this interplay. As a result, music that shows little or no linearity or goal-directedness, such as some atonal compositions, is not necessarily unpleasurable, for an interplay of tension and resolution might still be noticeable.

But what about music that, on the one hand, displays some kind of development, but on the other hand frustrates this development? Music that on the one hand hints at narrativity, on the other hand ends up being non-narrative. Is this music unpleasurable to listen to, because the desire for the end is aroused, yet not fulfilled? Referring to this kind of music, Kiene Brillenburg Wurth argues that "[…] these musics display or *enact* the (violent) break in the context, the paradox of the immemorial, and, in relation to this, the inability of closure or resolution that also typifies the 'experience of trauma'" (2002: 255, emphasis in original). She regards music that both represents and frustrates temporal development, by lacking closure, and therefore fulfillment, as enactments of traumatic events. With "enactment" she refers to the possibility of music voicing or staging "[…] a rupture *embodying or performing* the rupture of trauma: a rupture that resists narrative integration and, as such, resist an inclusive synthesis" (255, emphasis in original). Such music thus can be regarded as a representation of what a traumatic event is: an event that resists narrative integration. So, clearly this does not mean that listening to this kind of music is a traumatic event for the listener. Rather, Brillenburg Wurth recognizes a structural analogy between this kind of music and traumatic events.

Following Judith Herman, Brillenburg Wurth defines a traumatic experience as "[…] an intrusive experience of an overwhelming and often terrifying event that […] is not so much out-of-the-ordinary because it occurs rarely, outside the range of everyday life, but because it overthrows and interrupts 'the ordinary human adaptations to life'" (249). As a result,

> […] traumatic events are those events for which no context is (as yet) available to deal with them in an effective manner: to place or situate these events, to associate them with previous experiences in the networks of memory, and to thus integrate them in existing meaning schemes. (249)

Referring to studies of the work of Pierre Janet on memory and trauma, done by Bessel van der Kolk and Onno van der Hart, Brillenburg Wurth furthermore argues that traumatic memory is outside the reach of narrative memory and language. It remains forgotten because it is not stored in an available memory network, and yet it remains unforgettable because it has not yet been processed by those networks (253-254).

However, the notion of traumatic experience, as Brillenburg Wurth uses it, is not unproblematic, as Ernst van Alphen's account of the relation between experience, memory, and trauma shows. This account differs from Janet's, and thus from Brillenburg Wurth's, in the sense that Van Alphen speaks of the symbolic order and of discursivity, rather than of mental schemes or networks. In so doing, he is implying that an experience can no longer be seen as strictly individual:

> Although experience is subjectively lived, it is at the same time culturally shared […] Experiences are not only culturally shared because they are grounded on cultural discourses; this shared background also makes experiences and memories "sharable." The discourse that made them possible is also the discourse in which we can convey them to other humans. Our experiences and memories are therefore not isolating us from others; they enable interrelatedness – culture. (1999: 37)

Our experiences and memories make culture possible. At the same time, experience depends on discourse to come about, as Van Alphen asserts, after feminist scholars such as Teresa de Lauretis and Joan W. Scott: "[F]orms of experience do not just depend on the event or history that is being experienced, but also on the discourse in which the event is expressed/thought/conceptualized" (24). An event only becomes an experience once it has been made discursive. The notion of experience already implies a certain degree of distance from the event, Van Alphen contends: "[E]xperience is the transposition of the event to the realm of the subject. Hence the experience *of* an event is already a representation of it and not the event itself" (27, emphasis in original). Trauma, then, is the impossibility of experiencing, and subsequently memorizing and representing, an event. Therefore, Van Alphen argues, it is contradictory to speak of traumatic experience or memory. Experience is somehow discursive, while trauma is the impossibility of dealing with an event in a discursive manner (26). Thus, Brillenburg Wurth's characterization of traumatic events as "[…] precisely those events that are marked by a lack of distance, a lack of mediation" (2002: 249) does seem to comply with Van Alphen's account. Yet, her definition of a traumatic experience (a term which in itself already is a contradiction in Van Alphen's view) as an intrusive experience of an

overwhelming and often terrifying event is at odds with Van Alphen's account.

As I mentioned above, Brillenburg Wurth argues that some musical pieces can be labeled as representations of the phenomenon of a traumatic event, because these pieces do not allow for closure or resolution. She asserts that, if the events of a musical piece cannot be brought together in any way on some kind of metalevel, so that if the music cannot be related to an appropriate style type, then this piece is said to be a representation of what a traumatic event is (2002: 268). As an example she takes a musical piece that starts off tonally, using functional harmony. "[I]f the tonal center suddenly falls apart within a specifically tonal setting," Brillenburg Wurth explains, "this catches the 'autonomous gaze of experience' off-guard, leaving it with little else to feed on so as to organize and control listening as a tonal, synthetic listening" (264). Because the piece begins tonally, a sudden disruption of tonality cannot be united in any way with the tonal context, but at the same time the listener cannot think of an alternative style type to relate the music to instead of functional harmony. Therefore, Brillenburg Wurth argues, tonal listening is the only remaining option. As a result, the "[…] synthetic activity bumps against a sonorous matter that literally resists to be brought into relation […] and in this way opposes a formative activity feeding on recall, recognition, and integration" (265). When disruptions occur frequently, but with each disruption being different, this hinders the recognition of the specific disruption, which leads to fragmentation of the music. This, Brillenburg Wurth concludes, means that, after the disruption, the music never regains a final synthesis; the disruptions leave a gap in the whole of the music (266). And this, she argues, in turn leads to an absence of framework, of a style type, or metalevel as she calls it, in which this music can be fit, and subsequently can be remembered, which results in the music being a representation of what a traumatic event is.[6] Yet, is the absence of an appropriate style type, and with it the inability of closure or resolution, sufficient to establish such a representation? Trauma might imply the inability of closure, resolution, and the absence of a framework. However, this does not mean that the inability of closure or resolution and the absence of a framework automatically implies trauma. There is more to trauma than just this inability.

In order to show this, I would like to refer again to Van Alphen's account of trauma. He claims that one of the reasons many Holocaust survivors cannot give a proper account of what they underwent, is

[6] Listening to music always leaves gaps in the memory of that music, since it is impossible to remember all of the music that is listened to. This, however, has nothing to do with this music being a representation of the phenomenon of trauma.

because there exists a lack of a plot or narrative frame, by means of which the events of the Holocaust can be narrated as a meaningful coherence (1999: 28). This is more or less what Brillenburg Wurth contends regarding traumatic events, too. However, Van Alphen adds that the plots or narrative frames that are available or that are inflicted are unacceptable, because they do not do justice to the way in which one partakes in the event:

> Narrative frameworks allow for an experience of (life) histories as continuous unities. It is precisely this illusion of continuity and unity that has become fundamentally unrecognizable and unacceptable for many survivors of the Holocaust. The camp experience continues, whereas the camps only persist in the forms of Holocaust museums and memorials. The most elementary narrative framework, which consists of the continuum of past, present, and future, has disintegrated […] It is precisely for [the survivors, for whom] the past of the Holocaust continues that narrative frameworks that make use of the sequence past, present, and future are inadequate. (35)

Linearity, i.e. the sequence past, present, and future, do not coherently apply when characterizing the way in which Holocaust survivors continuously, i.e. in the present, undergo the camp events, which have happened in the past. There are no narrative frames available with which they can make these events discursive, and thus make them into experiences and a part of the past.

I would like to suggest that music can be said to be a proper representation of the phenomenon of a traumatic event, as soon as this music generates similar impossibilities regarding the musical past, present, and future. When it is no longer possible to distinguish in music between discrete musical events, that belong to the musical past, and the continuous unfolding of musical sounds, which is the present, then this music can be regarded as such a representation. This implies that this kind of music equals the absence of musical tense in music, since musical tense is supposed to establish a relation between the unfolding of musical sounds and the representation of events, that is, between the musical present and the musical past. Musical tense ensures a distance between the music and the listener, a distance that is gone in music that I would regard as a proper representation of what a traumatic event is. Musical tense makes musical events – and ultimately the musical work as a whole – discursive. Music that lacks musical tense cannot be framed anymore. Neither can it be regarded as a representation of events, for events are only represented in the musical past. Moreover, the listener cannot retain music that exhibits these characteristics, nor can s/he reflect upon it.

However, I doubt whether such music actually exists. It goes without saying that a listener cannot literally remember every moment

of a piece of music s/he has been listening too, but this does not have to lead to the impossibility of reflecting on the music. Even if the music was ungraspable and/or chaotic, it is close to impossible to arrive at a complete lack of distance between the music and the listener, caused by the absence of musical tense. It is as hard to create actual musical stasis, as it is to create music that lacks musical tense.[7] In fact, as I explained in the previous chapter, stasis equals focusing on the "now" exclusively, thereby eliminating musical tense and thus the connection between past and present. Hence, stasis equals the absence of musical tense and thus equals music that is a representation of the phenomenon of a traumatic event. As a result, it is as impossible to create music that can be regarded as a proper representation of this phenomenon as it is to attain musical stasis. On the other hand, below I will try to show that certain sounds might be regarded as a representation of the phenomenon of a traumatic event. Yet, it is close to impossible to create, through musical structures alone, a musical piece that could act as such a representation.[8]

In order to show why a proper representation of the phenomenon of a traumatic event cannot be constituted through musical structures, I would like to refer to a composition by Louis Andriessen; *Sweet for recorders* (1964), for alto recorder and tape. On the first page of the score (as published by Donemus Amsterdam in 1964), Andriessen writes the following introduction:

> *Sweet for recorders* is a piece for treble (alto) recorder solo where at a certain moment something happens, which is known in the [sic] psychiatry as a "black-out" (mental block). The soloist is incapable to continue playing, one hears a continuous grey emptiness during 1'45"; and after that period the soloist continues, not, or hardly influenced by his passed psycological [sic] situation (which is in this composition an auditive situation); or it should be the fact that he hardly plays new musical material, but most repetitions of previous musical elements.

Indeed, the piece begins with a virtuoso recorder part, in which large intervals and complicated rhythms can be heard. Then, at a very

[7] But I do not want to imply that, because all music has musical tense, all music is narrative. As I argued in chapter 3, musical tense is necessary for musical narrativity, but not vice versa. Ergo, musical tense does not automatically imply musical narrativity.

[8] In my view, the only musical structure that really is static and could act as such a representation would consist of a single, uniform sound, which will sound forever and has always sounded. As soon as a uniform sound stops, we can identify a closure. The result would then be that we have arrived at a piece of music that consists of one single event, but at least it rules out the possibility that we cannot reflect on it. We have bracketed it by turning it into an event, and therefore made it an event of the past on which we can ponder. We have succeeded in making the music discursive.

unexpected moment, the recorder stops and a uniform noise, resembling the hiss you can hear while playing a blank audiotape at a high volume, sets in during 1'45".[9] After that, the recorder part returns, as if nothing has happened, playing a variation of the last phrase that was played before the noise entered. The piece continues with variations of earlier musical material and ends in a fairly standard manner with a distinct closure.

During the course of the entire composition closures, and thus musical events, can be identified, the largest event being the 1'45" of noise. Within this period, no closures can be perceived, so only the fragment as a whole can be regarded as an event. As a result, one could say that there is a lack of musical tense during that period. But if we consider this period as being embedded within the piece, then, at most, we can say that musical tense is temporarily suspended. Moreover, since the timbre of the noise itself reminds the listener of a blank audiotape being played,[10] we might consider this fragment as an explanation of what a traumatic event is: the recording of an event, i.e. the original function of a tape recorder, but at the same time the impossibility of retaining and communicating this event, i.e. the blank audiotape that is audible. Hence, in a paradoxical manner, this fragment can be seen as a representation of the phenomenon of a traumatic event after all. Paradoxical, because it can be considered as a representation of an unframeable event as a result of the listener's understanding – and thus the framing – of the sound s/he is hearing. Only once the listener has recognized the sound as the hiss of a blank audiotape playing, s/he can subsequently label this sound as such a representation. Moreover, it is because of the indexical quality of the sound itself – i.e. the sound pointing to a blank audiotape that is being played – that the listener arrives at this interpretation, and not because the fragment as a whole constitutes a rupture in the music. Thus, not because of the musical structure, but because of the qualities of the sound itself, the listener can regard the fragment as such.

Still, the 1'45" of noise does not seem to fit in the piece as a whole at all. Its character differs fundamentally from the rest of the piece, without it being announced or anticipated in any way. Likewise, the return of the alto recorder after the 1'45" also comes unexpectedly, as the noise is uniform during the entire period and does not anticipate its

[9] Interestingly, the only recording of this piece that I could find (performed by Walter van Hauwe in 1988, released by Attacca Babel 8847) deviates from the original score here. Instead of a uniform noise, in this recording an electronically altered recorder part is inserted, accompanied by synthesized sounds. Perhaps the prospect of having to disturb the virtuoso instrumental part by random noise was, dare I say, too "traumatic" for the performer?

[10] Admittedly, the title of the composition aids in identifying the 1'45" of noise as the hiss of a blank audiotape being played – the hiss is the second recorder: a tape recorder, to be more exact.

ending. In other words: *Sweet for recorders* seems to be a composition that is incoherent, as it consists of two incompatible parts, one part dividing the other. But does that mean that the work is a representation of the phenomenon of a traumatic event? The listener cannot synthesize the parts into a coherent whole, because they are so utterly different. It is composition that has no coherence. Therefore, no appropriate style or type seems to be available to the listener with which s/he might grasp the music.

Yet, the listener might be able to comprehend this composition after all, because s/he can still structure the music. The music can be divided into three parts, the first and the third being closely related, while recognizing the complete difference of the second part in relation to the other parts. In this way, a structure is created. It is a structure that acknowledges the work's incoherence, but that does not make it a lesser structure. After all, structuring is not the same as assimilation; deciding which parts are and which parts are not related, amounts to the creation of a structure, and thus to a degree of comprehension as well.

Consequently, incoherent music, such as *Sweet for recorders*, does not necessarily have to be ungraspable, and thus cannot automatically be regarded as a representation of what a traumatic event is. Music is not a proper representation of a traumatic event until it lacks musical tense. And as I mentioned above, *Sweet for recorders* does not comply with this criterion. Thus, although the piece might seem incoherent, it does not lack tense. Hence, it is not a representation of the phenomenon of a traumatic event. Only the fragment that points to the playing of a blank audiotape might be regarded as such a representation, because of its timbral qualities, not because of its structural qualities. Therefore, incoherence, which is a structural quality, is not sufficient to establish a representation of what a traumatic event is.

To return to the original question posed at the beginning of this section: is music such as *Sweet for recorders* unpleasurable to listen to, because the desire for the end is aroused, yet disturbed? Well, the alto recorder piece is not predominantly goal-directed, although it is mostly linear. There is some kind of forward motion noticeable in the music, enough to arouse the feeling of heading towards a certain end, although it is unclear what this end exactly is. The noise fragment is a clear disturbance of the original linearity. If the composition would end with this noise, we would have a composition in which some kind of desire for the end is aroused, but disturbed, and finally unfulfilled. I am not sure whether this would mean that the piece is unpleasurable to listen to; there still can be a longing to hear it, and to hear it for the end. However, *Sweet for recorders* does not end here, but continues in a linear fashion and, as I remarked above, ends with a definite closure.

Thus, in the end, the original promise of an end is kept and desire is fulfilled.

Both musical narrativity and affective responses to music can be caused by the same phenomenon, i.e. the interplay of tension and resolution. Yet, this is not the only way in which musical emotions can be elicited. But this interplay, which the listener can notice because of musical tense, does allow for the experience of being moved by the music and for a possible narrative structuring of music.[11] Thus, on the one hand, musical tense offers the possibility of making music perception discursive and to communicate a musical experience (and, in doing so, reducing it to something that it is not, i.e. a representation). On the other hand, musical tense makes the arousal of musical affect possible, which cannot be fully articulated in any way in music, or words, or otherwise, because of its bodily aspect. Musical affect can only exist because of the relation between music and listener. Consequently, musical tense makes the representation of musical experience possible, but it remains impossible to give a complete account of this experience.

One aspect that I have not yet discussed in this chapter is that listening to music can be a shared experience, which might also be a reason that listening to music is pleasurable. As Robin Maconie remarks:

> For many people, sharing music in the company of others is part of its enjoyment. It suggests agreement but without the necessity for discussion. An individual can enjoy the reassurance of the reality of a musical experience without any lingering sense of personal anxiety. Because audiences respond spontaneously, there is something mysteriously persuasive about the experience of taking part […] A measure of wish-fulfillment on the part of some listeners cannot, however, be entirely ruled out. In identifying his own response with that of a mass audience a listener may simply wish to be seen as endorsing the principle of a reality of human nature to which music refers, irrespective of the particular case. (1990: 13)

In this case, Maconie argues, musical pleasure is aroused because the audience has a shared experience and reacts in a uniform manner. For instance, the audience is silent during the performance and applauds after the performance is done, when it concerns a traditional classical performance. Narrativization, as a means to communicate a listening experience, thus is not necessary for this kind of pleasure. On the contrary: exactly because the listener can refrain from discussion, from communication, but instead just has to react in uniformity with the rest of the audience, pleasure is aroused.

[11] But I do not argue that only narrative music can arouse affects.

Yet, is it really the case that there is agreement among the audience during and after a performance? Perhaps this might be so when (established) performers play traditional classical pieces in a conventional manner, but certainly not when new, contemporary compositions are performed. In these instances, the reactions of the audience can be anything but uniform, partly because there is not yet a (implicit or explicit) consensus regarding the status of these pieces. Put differently: the audience does not yet know how to react to these works in a socially correct manner. This relates to the second part of Maconie's argument: the response of the audience is not so much elicited performatively by the music itself, but is largely determined by what the audience believes is the correct or socially desired manner of conduct. Thus, the music is the cause of the response, not because of its musical qualities, but as a result of its cultural status. Here narrative enters the stage again, for it is through narrative that this status can be articulated.

Narrative is a means to mediate certain contents, such as ideas, beliefs, fantasies, histories, etc. As a consequence, one might expect that a musical narrative is capable of mediating certain contents as well. But what could the contents of a musical narrative be? This is an important question, for many theorists deny the possibility of musical narrativity exactly because they are convinced that such contents cannot exist. In the next chapter I try to demonstrate that a musical narrative does have contents, albeit contents that differ in many respects from that of verbal narratives.

6 THEMES

Narrative Doubts

Many musical works, especially tonal ones, consist of the exposition of one or more themes and their development. Through this treatment of themes, a temporal development can be represented and a musical narrative might be created. Yet, it is not an easy task to explain what this narrative is exactly about, since, in contrast to language, music has no clear referential qualities. And indeed, with the exception of the account I gave, in chapter 2, of Lachenmann's Second String Quartet, I have not really discussed the possible narrative contents of the pieces I analyzed in this study. However, a musical narrative, in order to be a genuine narrative, has to have contents. Therefore, the central theme of this chapter will be the discussion of the possible histories a musical narrative can cover.

Various tonal works, especially those that were written during the nineteenth century, are composed in order to depict some underlying story. A well-known example of such a work is Paul Dukas's symphonic scherzo *L'Apprenti Sorcier* (1897), which is supposed to be a musical translation of Johann Wolfgang von Goethe's ballad *Der Zauberlehrling* (1797). And indeed, when one compares the symphonic scherzo with this ballad, it is fairly easy to relate the musical events to the events represented in Goethe's text. Yet, Nattiez asks, is it also possible to reconstruct the verbal narrative by listening to the music only? In order to answer this question, he performed an experiment in which listeners, who were not familiar with Dukas's piece, and who were not told what the title of the composition was, had to reconstruct the story that is supposed to be depicted by the music they were listening to. None of the verbal accounts these listeners came up with had any resemblance with Goethe's ballad. Moreover, the diversity of accounts was remarkable. Each listener seemed to hear a different story in Dukas's music (Nattiez 1990: 246-248). Therefore, it appears to be very hard to determine, by listening to the music only, that the narrative contents of particular tonal works are conceived of as musical depictions of specific verbal narratives. But, at least the listeners were able to hear a story in the music, to articulate some narrative contents.

The articulation of the possible narrative contents of a musical piece becomes more difficult when it concerns contemporary, atonal works. In chapter 1 I explained that many theorists believe that these kinds of compositions cannot be grasped in a conventional manner, because its compositional methods do not lead to perceptibly rational results.

Furthermore, this kind of music is not "natural" in the sense that it can be regarded as a construction using a tonal order, i.e. the music does not make use of established Western tonal conventions. This music is regarded as fragmentary; the fragments do not constitute a larger whole. This would make it almost impossible to consider this music as a narrative with narrative contents.

However, as Theodor W. Adorno argues, the ideal that music consists of unrelated fragments leads to erroneous accounts of the meaning of those fragments:

> With the elimination of the principle of representation in painting and sculpture, and of the exploitation of fragments in music, it became almost unavoidable that the elements set free – colors, sounds, absolute configurations of words – came to appear as if they already inherently expressed something. This is, however, illusory, for the elements become eloquent only through the context in which they occur. The superstitious belief in the elementary and unmediated, to which expressionism paid homage and which worked its way down into arts and crafts as well as into philosophy, corresponds to capriciousness and accidentalness in the relation of material and expression in construction. To begin with, the claim that in itself red possesses an expressive value was an illusion, and the putative expressive values of complex, multitonal sounds were in fact predicated on the insistent negation of traditional sounds. Reduced to "natural material" all of this is empty, and theories that mystify it have no more substance than the charlatanism of *Farbton* experiments. (1997: 119)

Adorno thus reemphasizes that meaning cannot be inherent in media. Meaning emerges as a result of the relation between object and context. A single tone does not have any meaning; it only becomes meaningful when it is related to other tones, to other works, practices, extramusical phenomena, in short: when it is placed into internal and external contexts. To claim that contemporary atonal music consists of unrelated fragments only, fragments that have nothing to do with anything outside of themselves, ultimately implies that this kind of music is meaningless, let alone having a narrative content.

Giomi and Ligabue, too, discuss the narrativization of contemporary music. They argue that

> [e]very creative process (in music, literature or whatever) develops its own type of narration, even independently of its creator's purpose. This does not mean that we must find "non-intentional narrative structures" when the author used an abstract compositional organization (serial, for example) but, nevertheless, the composition can develop its own autonomous narrative path (perhaps even a random one), or it could include elements with a narrative character created by particular uses of the signification parameters (for example, through pitch or timbral ranges). (1998: 45)

On the one hand, Giomi and Ligabue contend that the listener must not look for non-intentional narrative structures in abstract musical structures, such as serial structures. Yet, they do acknowledge that it is possible to narrativize, at least to a certain extent, almost any cultural expression, regardless of the creator's intentions. And by analyzing, in chapter 3, Stockhausen's *Studie II* I have tried to show that serial music, too, in principle can be regarded as a narrative.

Still, John Neubauer is rather skeptical about the possibilities for musical narrativity in general. He does acknowledge that instrumental music has narrative potentialities, but he nevertheless concludes that it cannot actually be narrative: "Though instrumental music is incapable of *narrating*, it can *enact stories*: it can *show* even if it cannot *tell*, it can suggest *plots*, for instance in terms of themes and thematic development" (1997: 119, emphasis in original). Neubauer contends that music can suggest narrativity, without actually being narrative. However, narrating stories is a way of enacting, i.e. perform, present, or stage, stories. Narrating and enacting are not equal – enacting is more than just narrating – but they are not incommensurable, either. In another possible reading of Neubauer's remark story is equaled with temporal development. As I explained in chapter 2, drama can be regarded as the presentation of a temporal development. Consequently, in this reading, music would be a form of drama, instead of narrative. But, since many (instrumental and vocal) musical works can be regarded as the representation of a temporal development, rather than a presentation, these works *are* capable of being narrative.

Neubauer is not the only theorist who doubts the narrative possibilities of music. Nattiez holds a similar view. He observes that

> [i]f, in listening to music, I am tempted by the "narrative impulse," it is indeed because, on the level of the strictly musical discourse, I recognize returns, expectations and resolutions, but of what, I do not know. Thus I have a wish to complete through words what the music does not say because it is not in its semiological nature to say it to me. It is, to take up Adorno's paradoxical comment referring to Mahler, "a narrative which relates to nothing." (1990: 244-245)

Nattiez acknowledges that music has traits that resemble a narrative. Moreover, he lists two of the three characteristics that constitute the most basic definition of narrative, i.e. narrative is the representation of a temporal development. He acknowledges that music is temporal, and that during the listening the interplay of tension and resolution, which makes up a temporal development, can be heard. The only element that he does not mention is the fact that a musical narrative is a representation of such a development. In fact, it seems as if it is exactly because music lacks such a representational ability that he denies the

possibility of musical narrativity, for he remarks that he does not know to which the perceptible expectations and returns refer. Moreover, as I explained above, an experiment that he conducted showed that listeners invent many different, almost idiosyncratic, stories as a result of listening to the same piece of music. Therefore, Nattiez argues, "[t]he narrative, strictly speaking, is not *in* the music, but *in the plot imagined and constructed by the listeners* from functional objects" (249, emphasis in original). He concludes that

> […] music is not a narrative and […] any description of its formal structures in terms of narrativity is nothing but superfluous metaphor. But if one is tempted to do it, it is because music shares with literary narrative that fact that, within it, objects succeed one another: this linearity is thus an incitement to a narrative thread which *narrativizes* music. Since it possesses a certain capacity for imitative evocation, it is possible for it to imitate the semblance of a narration without our ever knowing the content of the discourse, and this influence of narrative modes can contribute to the transformation of musical forms. (257, emphasis in original)

Just like Neubauer, Nattiez acknowledges that music has the potentiality to be narrativized. Not because he thinks music can be narrative, but because it has the appearance of one as a result of its linear character. Nonetheless, Nattiez holds that music has no narrative contents and therefore he concludes that it cannot be narrative.

This is an argument against musical narrativity that is often made. Werner Wolf, for instance, claims that

> every discourse that is said to be narrative, has to be able to achieve precise heteroreference, i.e. a reference that goes beyond the work and its medium, in order to comply with the basic representational quality of storytelling. The visual arts undoubtedly are capable to do so, at least as concerns spatial objects, and of course verbal speech, too; speech cannot escape heteroreference at all, as the possibility of referentiality in even the most extreme literary experiments shows again and again. The "language" of music, however, is only capable of such reference in very few exceptional cases, and is in general resistant to precise nonmusical referentialization to such a degree that any linguistic characteristic of music is denied.[1]

[1] "Jeder Diskurs, der im Dienst des Narrativen stehen soll, muß zur erfüllung der basalen Darstellungsqualität des Erzählens zur präziser Heteroreferenz, d.h. zu einer Referenz jenzeits des betreffenden Werkes und seines Mediums, befähigt sein. Die bildende Kunst ist hierzu zweifellos in der Lage, wenigstens was räumliche Gegenstände betrifft, und natürlich auch die verbale Sprache; ja diese kann der Heteroreferenz gewissermaßen gar nich entkommen, wie die Möglichkeit der Referentialisierung selbst extremer literar-sprachlicher Experimente immer wieder zeigt. Die "Sprache" der Musik kann dagegen nur in eng begrenzten Ausnahmefällen einer vergleichbaren Referenz dienen und ist allgemein so resistant gegen präzise außermusikalische Referentialisierungen, daß ihr Sprachkarakter sogar überhaupt in Abrede gestellt wurde." (Wolf 2002: 77-78, my translation)

Again, because music cannot explicitly refer to nonmusical phenomena, it does not comply with the most basic function of narrative. Instead, Wolf claims, the reference of the "language" of music is mainly self-referential. This in contrast to verbal narratives, which cannot do otherwise than to refer to something outside itself, as Wolf maintains.

Apparently, for both Nattiez and Wolf verbal narrative is the paradigm to which every narrative has to comply. As a result, their conception of narrative is not medium independent, in contrast to the definition of narrative that I use, i.e. narrative is the representation of a temporal development. Yet, in this definition, too, the element of referentiality is accounted for, as narrative is supposed to be a *representation* of a temporal development, i.e. it has to refer to such a development. And indeed, as I explained in chapter 2, in music temporal developments can be represented; the listener can perceive expectations and resolutions in the music, yet these are not caused by the music itself. Music elicits expectations, by giving the impression that musical events lead to or cause other events. Real physical causation in music does not exist. It is the listener who interprets musical events as wanting to lead to other events, which leads to musical expectation. As a result, music is not actually tense or resolved. Rather, music represents tension and resolution. Even so, Wolf maintains that

> the progression of a musical discourse and its coherence is in general far more dependent on form and medium, i.e. determined by an *inner*musical syntax. As a consequence, it is at odds with the progression and coherence of narrative created by causality and teleology that relates to the logic of a fictional world *outside* of the respective narrative medium.[2]

But musical causality, linearity, and goal-directedness are not in the music itself. Instead, these are represented by the music, which means that the music refers to phenomena, such as causation and teleology that are outside of the music itself. Apart from the fact that musical causation does not exist in the music itself, all these phenomena depend on musical motion, which is evoked by the succession of musical events, that themselves are representations, as I explained in chapter 2, rather than actual physical entities. Thus ultimately, musical causation, linearity, and teleology are the product of representations.

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[2] "Die progression eines musikalischen Diskurses und dessen Kohärenz ist ingesamt wesentlich form- und mediumsabhängiger, d.h. bedingt durch eine *inner*musikalische Syntax, und steht damit quer zur Progression und Kohärenz des Erzählens durch Kausalität und Teleologie […] die sich auf die Logik einer scheinbaren Welt *jenseits* des jeweiligen narrativen Medium beziehen." (Wolf 2002: 78-79, emphasis in original, my translation)

A musical narrative's capacity to refer to extramusical phenomena, i.e. to a temporal development, might not be explicit enough for Wolf and Nattiez. Perhaps they would like to know what this development means and verify whether the meaning of this development is intersubjectively shared, before acknowledging that music can be narrative. I have to admit that music probably will not meet this demand. Nonetheless, the temporal development that can be heard in the music is the result of a representation. Consequently, it is this temporal development that is the contents of the musical narrative, however abstract this content might be. In the following analysis of *Petals* (1988), for violoncello and electronics *ad libitum*, composed by Kaija Saariaho, I will try to make this conception of musical contents more specific.

Petals' Possible Stories

Petals starts off very quietly, with the cello playing bowed tremolos in different intervals. These intervals, played *sul ponticello*, gradually change, resulting in a alternation of dissonant and more consonant intervals.[3] While changing, the music increases in volume. At 0'39" (as performed by Scott Roller, violoncello, in the recording released by Kairos 0012412KAI) the timbre of the cello is manipulated electronically. The sound becomes progressively more brutal and the texture thickens. The resulting timbre, which is a marked term here, sounds as if many cellos are played simultaneously, while the bows are pushed very hard into the strings. This timbre, which I label timbre I, develops, at 0'58", towards a bowed tremolo on a single note, accompanied by reverberated echoes of this note.

The focalization at the beginning of the performance of this piece, as well as of the piece as a whole, is similar to that of the performance of Boulez's *Anthèmes 2*, which I discussed in chapter 2. As in that performance, the electronic sounds in *Petals* are influenced by the manner in which the live part is performed. Nevertheless, the electronic part has a big impact on the narrative that is depicted by *Petals*, for the main musical actor in this piece is timbre, which to a large extent is created by electronic manipulations of acoustic sounds. Dynamics functions as an additional actor in the opening statement of this piece. As a result of the transformations to which these two

[3] With "consonant" and "dissonant" I mean "resolved" and "tense," respectively. And although these consonant and dissonant intervals sometimes might be equal to what are considered consonant and dissonant intervals in functional harmony (in *Petals* a perfect fifth often sounds like a resolved interval), this does not necessarily have to be the case. For instance, in this piece, at 4'08", a major seventh appears which sounds like a resolution. Consonance and dissonance thus are not necessarily dependent on functional harmony, but depend on the local contexts in which they appear.

musical parameters are submitted a temporal development from quiet, bowed tremolos in different intervals, via electronic transformations of the cello's timbre, to a single note is represented. Hence, it is because of these parameters that the listener is able to plot his/her way through the beginning of the piece. Moreover, a musical context is created that codetermines the listener's expectations regarding this piece, and thus the UNLL-process that s/he undergoes. In this case, the musical context does not outline the limitations or possibilities regarding pitches or harmonies, although, as I remarked above, a sense of dissonance and consonance can be noticed. Rather, the musical context here mainly outlines the range of timbres that the listener might expect, i.e. tremolos and certain electronic manipulations of these tremolos.

This musical context holds for the continuation of the piece, but also a new element, i.e. melody, is introduced. At 1'03" short ascending lines, consisting of notes which are being played tremolo, that sound agitated and that gradually ascend. In between these lines short rests are placed. The highest note is reached at 1'17", which is also played tremolo. This note is being played until 1'22", where another note, a major second higher, sounds, which is played *sul ponticello*. This note sounds like the resolution of the previous one. The note is accompanied by a low note that functions as a bourdon at 1'26". Both notes are progressively detuned electronically, and the sound eventually transforms into timbre I, while different intervals are played. At 1'45" this texture thins out again. A continuing tremolo can be heard at 1'50" while the music becomes more quiet. A gradually descending line is played, interjected by a bourdon note. Ultimately, the music resolves, in a low register, into a perfect fifth.

Pitch has increased in importance in this section of *Petals*. By focusing on consonance and dissonance, tension and resolution becomes apparent, which determines the temporal development that is represented, as well as the listener's plotting activity. As a result, pitch becomes an actor, next to timbre and texture. Dynamics does not function as an actor here. Furthermore, the musical context is augmented as well; the range of melodic and harmonic possibilities, as implied by the music thus far, is added.

Pitch continues to be a principal actor, as is timbre. Motif A – i.e. a marked melodic phrase, played tremolo, appears at 2'04". Variations on this motif are played sequentially, *sul ponticello*, until 2'13". At this point, motif B, derived from motif A, is played with timbre I. Motif B is repeated and varied from 2'21" onward by the cello, non vibrato, while slowing down. This variation is marked and thus stands out in this piece, because it is not played as a tremolo, in contrast to most of the music that has sounded up until this point. At 2'30" another variation on motif B can be heard, this time with longer notes. The music slows down even more and ends on a harmonic major seventh interval. Other

intervals are played, non-vibrato, from 2'46", resolving in a perfect fifth, followed again by a major seventh. Ultimately, the upper note of this interval is sounding on its own. This note is accompanied by a note, a perfect fifth higher, at 3'00". Next, this higher note sounds alone, before different long lower notes are played along with this note, which results in an alternation of dissonant and consonant intervals. This phrase is resolved in a perfect fifth at 3'33", while the music slows down. At 3'35" this interval is played as a tremolo, while reverberated tremolos at different pitches can be heard as well. This results in texture becoming an additional actor, for the music transforms, at 3'42", in a thick texture, consisting of several different tremolos, whose pitches gradually change while the frequency of the tremolos slows down. At 3'52" the tremolos stop, while a low note is played. Next, this note is accompanied by a high note, played as a tremolo and *sul ponticello*. This high note progressively detunes and transforms into timbre I at 4'03". Within this timbre, different intervals are noticeable, and ultimately there is a feeling of resolution, although a major seventh interval can be heard, an interval which is considered to be very dissonant in tonal harmony. The music slows down, as is the frequency of the tremolo, until the tremolo disappears.

A different marked term appears at 4'13", when a pizzicato note is played, which acts as both the closure of the previous phrase and the start of motif C. This motif consists of the pizzicato tone, a minor second played as a tremolo, followed by a high note, played with a slight glissando and non vibrato, while the reverberation of the minor second interval is still audible. Consequently, again both pitch and timbre (because of the alternation between plucked and bowed notes) act as principal actors in this motif. At 4'18", 4'23", and 4'27" variations of motif C can be heard. In each of these variations, the motif gradually ascends, while the pizzicato note retains its original pitch. Hence, they are not literal repetitions of the original motif. Nevertheless, these variations do contribute to the process of binding that ultimately leads to comprehension. By grouping sounds into phrases, and labeling them as variations of a certain motif that is identified as well, the music that is sounding is structured, which ultimately results in comprehension of the music. Moreover, the result is that the listener has clearer expectations with regard to the music that will sound next. These expectations again might lead to eliciting feelings of tension and resolution, which becomes apparent in the third variation. In this variation, the cello is played with the bow pressing hard into the strings, and ends at 4'41", after the appearance of the pizzicato note is delayed. There is a silence between the variation and this note. This pizzicato note can be regarded as indicating the beginning of a variation, but it also evokes a sense of closure. Its function thus is ambiguous in the sense that it can belong

simultaneously to the previous and to the next variation. This ambiguity is enhanced by the fact that the note always has the same pitch; it does not ascend along with the rest of the variation. This makes it even harder to classify the note as belonging to a particular variation. Thus, the note can both mark the beginning and the ending of any of the variations of motif C that have appeared thus far. As a consequence, the delaying of this note results in a building up of tension – for the anticipated ending is postponed – and, ultimately, in the resolution of this tension.[4]

Pitch and timbre remain the principal actors during the remainder of the work. A longer motif D starts at 4'42", with the ending of this motif being similar to motif C, namely a slight glissando up to a high note, at the same pitch as in motif C. This glissando, because it is a repetition of earlier glissandi, helps in the process of binding. At 4'51", 4'55", and 5'01" variations of motif D are played. The ending of the third variation does not end with a glissando, but in a tremolo, which descends at 5'05". The tremolos ascend again at 5'10", and subsequently descend at 5'16", while their frequency slows down. Ultimately, the music ends up in a minor second, played as a tremolo, which becomes progressively more and more reverberated. While the tremolo fades away, a long note, played non-vibrato, starts at 5'31".

Next, a new variation of motif C appears, with the pizzicato opening, at 5'34". At 5'40", 5'47", 5'54", 6'01", 6'07", and 6'16" new variations on that motif can be heard. They all begin with the same pizzicato note, and each variation is more reverberated and sounds more electronic. In doing so, a feeling of distance is elicited more and more in each variation. The appearance of these variations can be regarded as an analepsis; a returning to a previous section in which motif C and its variations were first introduced. At 6'25" the pizzicato note of motif C is played again, now acting as a closure, which once again underlines the ambiguous character of this note. It is followed by a heavily reverberated tremolo, that resolves into an interval that feels like a consonant. The music becomes almost silent.

The appearance of the variations of both motifs C and D, along with the feeling of resolution and the diminuendo that starts at 6'25", all contribute to the representation of a temporal development in *Petals*. These musical phenomena, together with the feeling of tension and resolution these variations sometimes elicit, do hint at some kind of progression. Moreover, a sense of completion is evoked as a result of the diminuendo and the resolution into a consonant interval.

[4] The glissandi at the end of each variation sound more univocally like an ending, even though these, too, glide between the same pitches in each variation. Probably, this is because, in contrast to the glissandi, the pizzicato note is played just before the first appearance of motif C. And there, too, this note acts both as a closure and as a beginning.

Yet, *Petals* does not end here. It continues with a final section, which can be regarded as a recapitulation of the piece. The main characteristics of the work, such as tremolos, alternations between dissonance and consonance, and electronic manipulations of the sound of the cello – including the reappearance of timbre I, which are caused or undergone by the composition's principal actors, i.e. timbre and pitch, are presented again. At 6'33", a low note, played as a tremolo, appears. Much reverb is added. Next, several intervals, played as tremolos, can be heard, alternating between dissonance and consonance. High-pitched tremolos are played from 6'56" onwards. At 7'03", the bow is pressed harder into the strings of the cello, resulting in a distorted sound that resembles timbre I. This distortion is augmented electronically. At 7'09" more quiet high-pitched tremolos are played that are accompanied at 7'15" by a lower-pitched tremolo. The higher-pitched tremolo fades away. Several intervals are played as tremolos from 7'19" onwards, which converge at 7'23" into single note tremolos with much reverb. Gradually, other tones are added. Progressively, the timbre changes into timbre I at 7'37". Different ascending intervals can be heard within timbre I that alternate between consonance and dissonance, ending at 8'01" in a single, non vibrato note, accompanied by low-pitched electronic reverberations of timbre I. Next, this single note is played as a tremolo with much reverb and echoes of timbre I, and is electronically altered while starting to fade away at 8'14" until all sound has disappeared at 8'46", which marks the ending of the piece.

This analysis of *Petals* actually is an account of one of the possible paths that can be plotted while listening to the piece. It is one of the manners in which this composition can be comprehended, a comprehension that is accomplished by regarding the work as a narrative: it is comprehended by narrativizing it. This approach could fail if it were the case that *Petals* could not be considered as the representation of a temporal development. Yet, as my analysis shows, this is possible. Firstly, I was able to divide the piece into separate sections, each of which representing a local development. Secondly, the work as a whole represents a development: it shows an introduction, a clear ending at 6'33", and a final recapitulation, which also has a definite ending. Again, it is important to bear in mind those notions such as "introduction," "ending," and "recapitulation" are not inherent in the music. Instead, they are musical representations of attributes that do not exist in the music itself. In between the beginning and ending, four motifs are presented, as are their respective developments. Moreover, the motifs themselves are related: motif B evolves out of motif A, and D out of C. Additional unity is created by the timbre of the sounds, and the repeated occurrence of timbre I throughout the piece. In fact, *Petals* could be characterized as

representing the development of the interplay of acoustic and electronic sounds, told by an imperceptible external narrator.

Although this characterization can be considered as complying with the assertion that timbre is one of the principal actors in the composition, it is not the only possible characterization one can give. Since pitch is the second principal actor, one could also say that *Petals* is a representation of the development of pitch turning from an unimportant factor at the beginning of the work into a principal actor during the course of the piece. A third characterization that is possible involves both actors, for *Petals* can also be considered as the development of the tension between pitch and timbre. Timbre obscures the clarity of pitch, but at the same time, even in timbre I pitches and harmonies can be discerned throughout the work.

Because of these accounts, it could be argued after all that Wolf's criticism regarding the lack of music's referential qualities is justified. And indeed, because of my definition of musical actor, i.e. that musical parameter that causes or undergoes a musical event, a narrative account of a musical piece to a certain extent always involves the music itself. However, musical narratives are not just about musical actors, but also about temporal developments in which these actors play a role. As I argued above, these developments are not in the music itself. Thus ultimately, a musical narrative does refer to extramusical phenomena, namely to such a temporal development. The fact that this might be the representation of the development of one or more musical parameters does not diminish its extramusicality. Moreover, it is because of this special characteristic that a musical narrative can tell about narrativity itself, as I will argue below.

The above accounts do not exhaust the possible narrative characterizations of *Petals* that can be given. It is because of my selection of pitch and timbre as the principal actors that the above characterizations are possible. But even though these parameters are the principal actors in this reading, this does not imply that no other choice is possible. Perhaps rhythm, which I hardly discussed, or dynamics could also be considered as important actors, which would result in different accounts of the work. The composition does not dictate a particular account. The possibility of giving different narrative accounts of *Petals* is not foreclosed by the piece itself. The listener has to decide for him/herself which narrative path s/he will follow, and thus which story s/he will hear in *Petals*.

A Narrative on Narrativity

Not only particular musical works may explicitly call upon the listener's capacities to narrativize music. In verbal narratives, too, the reader may be forced to actively contribute to the shaping of the

narrative. McHale signals this phenomenon in certain postmodern novels. As an example he mentions Joseph Heller's *Catch-22* (1961), which shows a temporal indeterminacy. In this novel, McHale explains, a crucial event, Snowden's death over Avignon, happens both before and after the Great Big Siege of Bologna (1987: 108-109). It is up to the reader to decide how to place this event temporally, or even to leave it undecided. Furthermore, McHale refers to multiple-ending texts, such as John Fowles's *The French Lieutenant's Woman* (1964), which contains three alternative endings, of which at least two are mutually exclusive (109-110). Again, the reader's narrative impulse is called upon by the novel, but is at the same time frustrated by it. Because of the narrative ambiguities in these novels, the process of narrativization is complicated. This process now becomes a conscious activity, instead of something that is done without really paying attention to it, which for instance might be the case when reading conventional novels. Such novels do not really challenge the reader's capacities for narrativization, unlike the postmodern novels mentioned above. As a result, in these unconventional novels the process of narrativization is made explicit.

Likewise, in atonal music, such as *Petals*, the process of narrativization is foregrounded. In atonal music linearity and musical causation, which are constitutive of musical narrativity, are not straightforward. This is often not the case in tonal music. For instance, a Western Listener can interpret a dominant chord in tonal music as a clear metaphorical cause of a tonic chord, without consciously reflecting on it. The process of musical narrativization, during which such decisions are made, oftentimes remains implicit in tonal music. In atonal music, on the other hand, this process is made explicit, which stresses the artificiality of narrative. Atonal musical narratives articulate the fact that a narrative is a construction. Conversely, tonal musical narratives usually give the impression of being narrative in a more "natural" way, because the process of narrativization remains implicit, and thus does not highlight the process responsible for the creation of this construction called narrative.[5] It is possible that tonal music produces problematic narrative moments as well, but these moments are far more numerous in atonal music. Atonal music explicitly foregrounds the artificiality of musical narrativity, whereas this happens far less frequently in tonal music.

Perhaps it is because of this supposed naturalness of tonal musical narratives that Susan McClary (2004) holds that only tonal music can be narrative. Since atonal music is not based on functional harmony,

[5] Again, with this remark I do not imply that the object itself, in this case music, has nothing to do with narrativity. On the contrary, narrativization is a two-way process, in which an object has certain narrative potentialities which might invite the observer to narrativize this object.

she argues, these musical works cannot be narrative. McClary claims that the narrative processes in music composed from 1700 to 1900 stem from the tonality that undergirds this music. It is tonal, functional harmony that gives this kind of music a sense of direction and a goal, and it is the deviation from accepted models and forms that makes a particular story interesting. McClary, however, does not seem to acknowledge the possibility that musical narrativity can also be constituted by means other than functional harmony. Rather, she regards music composed after 1900 as anti-narrative, for this kind of music does not comply with functional harmony. In her view, contemporary music should be seen as attempts at breaking the hegemony of turning musical processes into narratives, this hegemony being functional harmony. And indeed, atonal contemporary music can be regarded as breaking a certain kind of hegemony, namely the hegemony of tonality as the only means of establishing narrativity.

Consequently, atonal musical narratives might be considered to show that the grand architecture called functional harmony is a human construct, despite claims of functional harmony being some kind of naturally given, universal sonic order. Some musicians, composers, and theorists believe that tonality is a natural phenomenon, since it is supposedly based on the natural overtone series, which is a natural, acoustic phenomenon. However, as I explained before, this claim cannot be sustained. The intervals that make up tonality only partially match with those given in the natural overtone series. Moreover, many forms of non-Western music do not make use of tonality, but are not less "natural" because of this. Therefore, the belief that Western tonality is universal is nothing more than just that: a belief, which has attained an almost mythical status. Atonal music is not less "natural" than tonal music, but because atonal music does not conform to generally known musical conventions, grasping this music requires quite some effort on the part of the listener. Adorno argues this position as follows:

> Aesthetic norms that are said to correspond to the perceiving subject's invariant forms of reaction are empirically invalid; thus the academic psychology is false that, in opposing new music, propounds that the ear is unable to perceive highly complex tonal phenomena that deviate too far from the natural overtone relations: There is no disputing that there are individuals who have this capacity and there is no reason why everyone should not be able to have it; the limitations are not transcendental but social, those of second nature. (1997: 346-347)

Adorno asserts that music that is closely related to the natural overtone series is easier to grasp. And perhaps it is indeed the case that systems, such as functional harmony, which are to a certain extent related to the

natural overtone series, are easier to learn. This might explain the power of tonality, at least for the Western listener. After all, many non-Western forms of music are not that closely related to the natural overtone series, yet seems not difficult to grasp for the participants of the culture in which this music is produced. As Adorno stresses, listening is socially determined. This implies that listening competencies are not fixed, but change along with cultural changes. As a result, a listener should in principle be able to grasp atonal music. However, the listener has to make an effort to learn new musical conventions with which contemporary music can be comprehended. As the composer Hanns Eisler and Adorno contend:

> The ear of the layman, […] as contrasted to that of the musical expert, is indefinite and passive. One does not have to open it, as one does the eye, compared to which it is indolent and dull. But this indolence is subject to the taboo that society imposes upon every form of laziness. Music as an art has always been an attempt to circumvent this taboo, to transform the indolence, dreaminess, and dullness of the ear into a matter of concentration, effort, and serious work. Today indolence is not so much overcome as it is managed and enhanced scientifically. Such a rationally planned irrationality is the very essence of the amusement industry in all its branches. Music perfectly fits the pattern. (2004: 74-75)

Eisler and Adorno argue along the same lines as Lachenmann does: lethargy is sustained by the music industry – which mainly produces music that does not challenge the listener. Atonal music offers new sounds and sonic structures that can be grasped by the listener, but in order to achieve this s/he cannot rely on his/her musical habits alone. The listener cannot expect to grasp new kinds of music just by passively undergoing this music. S/he has to concentrate and make an effort in order to be able to make sense of the music. Listening becomes a conscious activity, and narrativization is an example of the way this activity can be performed.

As I have argued, narrativization is one of the modalities for processing atonal music. Functional harmony is not the only possible way through which musical processes can be turned into musical narratives. It is, however, a very effective one; perhaps even more effective than other musical parameters. It is because of the effectiveness of functional harmony that the process of narrativization of tonal music often remains implicit. In atonal music, on the other hand, the listener has to make an effort in order to discern any linearity or causation, to distinguish a possible narrative path. This path is not clearly laid out. Due to the idiosyncrasy of the music and the frequent lack of clear, univocal linearity in atonal music, it is up to the listener to select one of the many possible paths that might be possible, if any. But this does not necessarily imply, as McClary argues, that atonal

music is anti-narrative. Rather, in atonal music, just as in certain postmodern novels, the process of narrativization is foregrounded, whereas in many tonal musical works, like in conventional novels, this process remains implicit. In trying to narrativize atonal music, an activity which can be either successful or fail, the listener's attention has to be focused explicitly on this process, as well as on the decisions which have to be made.[6]

Because the process of narrativization is made explicit in atonal musical narratives, the contents of narrative atonal music actually consist of an account of the process of narrativization. The representation of a temporal development, the abstract contents of an atonal musical narrative, is in fact a report of the way in which a particular musical piece can be comprehended in a narrative manner. An atonal musical narrative makes explicit the mechanisms of a narrative. It is a metanarrative; a story about the principles of narrativity.

[6] The conclusion that the narrativization of atonal music can be successful has important consequences for the claim that narrative presupposes some fixed underlying structure. Hayden White asserts that by means of the creation of narratives self-repressing or self-disciplining social subjects are produced. It is "[…] a process in which individuals are compelled to introject certain master narratives of imaginary social and life histories or archetypical plot structures, on the one side, and are taught to think narrativistically, on the other, that is, to imagine themselves as actors or characters in certain ideal story types or fables, and to grasp the meaning of social relations in narrational, rather than analytical, terms" (1999:155-156). Through narrative, human subjects can view themselves as coherent individuals that have a clear place within the culture they live in. They believe their life histories are linear and teleological, i.e. the life they lead has a purpose. In order to sustain this belief, to become adequate actors in these ideal story types, and to comply with the master narratives of their culture, they have to make up their own "tales of becoming." The events they experience during their lives are structured, manipulated, or neglected in order to comply with these master narratives or archetypical plot structures. As a result, the individual's life is a construction, a construction s/he is constantly changing and adjusting as new events are experienced. Hence, the creation of the narrative construction that makes up the individual's identity is an ongoing process. Moreover, it is not something that is naturally given, but an artifact that individuals create themselves while referring to archetypical master plots. Likewise, McClary seems to regard only those musical works as narratives, which are based on functional harmony, which she seems to consider as a particular archetype. Yet, functional harmony is not some universal, natural order. The supposed universality of functional harmony is a belief that has attained an almost mythical status. Hence, I consider functional harmony as a mythical master plot. But music does not have to comply with this order to be regarded as narrative, as I have shown in this study. Perhaps this is what narrative analyses of contemporary music might teach us: resistance to archetypical plots or master narratives does not automatically imply a condemnation to incoherence or chaos. Nor does it mean that it is impossible to regard objects or individuals that resist these plots and narratives, in a narrative manner. Idiosyncrasy does not exclude narrativity. On the contrary: unique phenomena sometimes tell the most interesting stories.

It is possible that tonal narratives can be regarded as metanarratives as well. In theory, tonal music can also foreground the process of narrativization. However, atonal musical narratives do so in a conscious manner. Atonal musical narratives explicitly activate this particular perspective, and this perspective can subsequently be adopted when listening to other kinds of music.

An atonal musical narrative foregrounds the modes of musical structuring, and more specifically the narrative processing of music. It results in a kind of structuring that is distinct from other types of structuring. However, in discussing the narrative structuring of music, Keith Potter does not seem to fully acknowledge this distinction. He argues that, regardless of the kind of music,

> […] repeated listening to a work is in itself narrative-forming. We tend to construct narratives for ourselves even on a single hearing of a piece. And how can we be surprised in the ways I'm implying non-narrativity may surprise us if there is no expectation to be thwarted, no narrative logic to be denied? Must all good music ultimately be listened to – must all good music ultimately be composed – as a sequence of expectations created, then fulfilled or denied, as Hans Keller seems to have maintained? Even more problematically, don't all of us – even we sophisticated experimental or postmodern listeners – break up music along proportional lines we can take in and remember, if not actually impose what we would call a fully-fledged narrativity? But then can't the difficulties and ambiguities of non-narrative forms themselves become the subject of experiment among composers and of more discussion by all of us? I increasingly feel that we don't pay sufficient attention to the way music moves through time, or – perhaps better – articulates its own space. Most of my listening to new works suggests that even when composers appear interested in non-narrative forms, they still end up indebted to "conventional" notions of structure, especially of proportion. (1996: 8-9)

Potter makes a rather surprising comment by remarking that we have to pay more attention to the way music moves through time, or "perhaps better – articulates its own space." On the one hand, it seems as if Potter is claiming that a spatial conception of music is more accurate than a temporal one. But we could also read "space" as meaning "context," rather than spatiality. This context, then, would be created by the UNLL-process. In this reading, the music articulates its own space via the UNLL-process, i.e. it creates its own musical context, which is the simultaneous organization of sounds and/or events. And this context is indeed articulated with the aid of what Potter calls "conventional" notions such as structure.

Yet, narrative is a special kind of structure, namely a structure that represents a temporal development. Potter seems to argue that a listener is always inclined to narrativize the music, whether this listener

is an experienced contemporary music listener or not. But he does not really specify the characteristics that are distinctive for this kind of structuring. A musical metanarrative, however, has to articulate those characteristics, if it is to be a narrative about narrativity, instead of about, say, musical structuring in general. Consequently, I will examine below which of the narrative elements are made prominent in a musical metanarrative.

Events. Music can represent musical events because of musical tense. Musical tense makes the detection of discrete, retainable segments in the music possible, and thus is also a condition for musical comprehension. As I argued in chapter 3, musical tense cannot be pointed out in the music directly. Rather, the listener's ability to detect discrete, retainable segments in the music acts as an index for musical tense. In tonal music, musical events, in the form of clearly demarcated themes, for instance, often are represented in a relatively straightforward and conventional manner. This is not always the case in tonal music, but far more frequently than in atonal music, in which the representation of musical events generally is far more complicated. Take Ligeti's *Désordre*, for instance, which I analyzed in chapter 2. In this piece, closures, which bracket musical events, are represented in a rather complicated manner. Cadences or clear themes do not constitute musical events here. Instead, the rhythmical shifts of octaves act as closures and thus bracket musical events, which is a far less straightforward manner of representing events. As a result, this representation is made prominent.

Sariaaho's *Petals*, which I discussed earlier in this chapter, also foregrounds the representation of musical events by making closure explicit. Closures, by which musical events can be identified, are represented by the breaking off of ascending lines, as for instance between 1'03" and 1'17", or the changing of timbre from a cello tremolo into timbre I, as happens between 1'22" and 1'45". Again, closures and events are represented in more unconventional manners, such as through the use of timbre. Likewise, Ligeti's *Ten Pieces for Wind Quintet*, analyzed in chapter 4, closures and musical events are represented in unconventional ways. For instance, texture is one of the principal means by which closure is represented in Ligeti's quintet, as is dynamics, which are parameters to which the (Western) listener is not conventionally attuned. Consequently, these remain relatively obscured in this composition. The same holds for Lachenmann's Second String Quartet, "Reigen seliger Geister," where the alternation of pitched and unpitched sounds is one, less conventional, way in which closures are represented and musical events are articulated. In Boulez's *Anthèmes 2* the same is achieved by the alternation of electronic and acoustic sounds. Stockhausen's *Studie II*, lastly, exhibits clear musical phrases, which on the one hand sound very unfamiliar

because of the timbres that are used, whereas on the other hand closures are often represented through established musical paradigms. As a result of the tension between familiarity and unfamiliarity the representation of musical events, i.e. the musical phrases, are foregrounded.

In the abovementioned atonal compositions, the representation of musical events is not established in a conventional, straightforward manner. In atonal music, the representation of musical events generally does not make use of established musical conventions. As a result, this kind of music does not feel as "natural" as many tonal musical works might appear. Rather, these atonal musical works articulate the fact that the representation of musical events is the result of a construction, that it is artificial.

Space/location. Musical events can be placed in a musical space. Musical space is the explicit demonstration and/or manipulation of this placement, while location is the placement of sounds and/or events, which remains implicit, i.e. it is not thematized or manipulated. Most musical compositions do not make the placement of musical events explicit. Nevertheless, the geometric distribution of performers, and thus of the sounds that they will produce, is thematized by several contemporary composers, such as Stockhausen, Galina Ustvolskaja, Wolfgang Rihm, and György Kurtág.

Furthermore, many electronic and electro-acoustic musical works manipulate musical space. In *Anthèmes 2* and *Petals*, for instance, artificial reverb is used in order to create the illusion of a changing distance. Heavily reverberated musical events seem to be in the background compared to events that are not as heavily reverberated. Moreover, events seem to move from left to right and vice versa in the stereo image. Because the placement of the musical events is manipulated in these manners in *Anthèmes 2* and *Petals*, these works make musical space explicit.

Sequential ordering, rhythm, frequency. Ordering in music is represented by the succession of musical events. Via this ordering, the rhythm, or pace, of the music can be determined. The music can slow down or speed up by alterations of the ordering of events. A good example of this is Reich's *Piano Phase*, which I discussed in chapter 2. Here, the development that is represented by the music is delayed by the numerous repetitions of events. Yet, as I argued in my discussion of this piece, this does not make the music non-narrative. It only delays the unfolding of the musical fabula. This is in contrast to Vitiello's *18 (watery variation)*, where repetition obscures any clear development. In this piece, there is no clear start, and no ending either, only local developments that do not contribute to the representation of a development by the work as a whole.

As can be concluded from the analyses of these pieces, ordering, rhythm, and frequency are means by which development can be either supported or frustrated. It is in these capacities that atonal music makes ordering, rhythm, and frequency explicit. Hence, I will incorporate the elaboration of how atonal music can do this in my discussion of linearity and goal-directedness. For, as I explain below, it is the combination of linearity and directedness that makes possible the representation of a temporal development, and it is through ordering, rhythm, and frequency that this representation can be influenced.

Linearity and goal-directedness. Linearity and goal-directedness can be assessed by relating a sequence of events to musical contexts. The succession of musical events, as well as the simultaneous occurrence of events, makes up a musical context. Within a musical context events can be evaluated. Musical events are related to the musical context that is constituted by the events that have sounded thus far. In this way, these terms can be combined into larger events, thereby creating larger (sub)contexts in which can be observed which sounds stand out in relation to other sounds within the composition. In this way, new markedness relations, and thus new meanings, can emerge.

In *Ten Pieces for Wind Quintet*, one of the ways these contexts are created is through the repeated occurrence of the alternation of staccato chords and short melodic phrases, which both establishes coherence between the different pieces and acts as a context within which musical events can be evaluated. Again, in order to be aware of these contexts a conscious effort on the part of the listener is required. As a result, the listener has to try to actively, consciously recognize musical contexts in order to ultimately grasp and comprehend the music. For these contexts make it possible to assess musical events, as well as providing some kind of continuity between these events. This is actually not that different from verbal narrative. Gerrig and Egidi, paraphrasing Wolfgang Iser, note that

> […] narratives refer to a small selection of details and let readers complete their work by imagining the rest […] The resulting discontinuity that characterizes narratives requires an active role on part of the reader. (2003: 36)

Narratives only give hints – some, such as postmodern novels and atonal music, less than other narratives – and leave it up to the reader, or listener, to fill in the blanks. The filling in of these blanks results in the recognition of the musical context created by musical events and in which these events can be evaluated.

The events in *Petals* also provide contexts, by outlining the range the pitches and the kinds of timbre within which the musical events of the piece can be evaluated. Other, less prominent contexts are provided

by dynamics and texture. In a similar manner contexts are created in "Reigen seliger Geister," in this case through the presentation of unconventional musical sounds and the sparseness of conventional musical phrases. The musical contexts in *Studie II* are a combination of more familiar tonal contexts, those that concern timbre, and others that are the result of the segmentation of the music and its melodic idiosyncrasies. In *Désordre* contexts are created as a result of the representation of musical events that are primarily outlined by rhythm, whereas in *Anthèmes 2* the principal context concerns timbre. All these contexts determine the expectations the listener might have regarding the course the music will take. If in, for instance, "Reigen seliger Geister" a sudden melodic phrase appears, this phrase is marked relative to the rest of the music, which is characterized by a lack of conventional music. This characterization is determined by the musical context, which is created through the presentation of unconventional musical sounds and the sparseness of conventional musical phrases. But this context, just as the others I mentioned above, is not conventionally given and do not refer to established musical conventions, but has to be recognized by the listener by comparing musical events. As a result, atonal music makes explicit the construction of these contexts.

As I remarked above, these contexts determine the expectations the listener might have regarding the course the music will take. Hence, linearity and goal-directedness, which literally are particular courses music can take, are determined by musical contexts as well. A structure that exhibits a certain degree of linearity and goal-directedness can be considered as a narrative structure, for it is through these components that a temporal development can be represented. As I explained in chapter 4, in contrast to poetry, narrative meaning is related to linearity, i.e. some kind of forward motion that is implied by the narrative. Narrative arouses the sense that the reader/listener has to read/listen on to the next sentence/note, the next page/phrase, the next chapter/movement. In short: the arousal to read/listen for the end. Narrative is predominantly linear, whereas poetry is nonlinear. Moreover, since narrative is the representation of a temporal development, a narrative also has one or more goals, or ends. A development is the transformation from one state to another, with this other state being the goal of the development. This does not mean that a narrative always has to be unequivocally directed to that particular goal. In some cases this goal is anticipated retrospectively, i.e. after a particular goal has actually been reached. During the reading/listening the reader/listener might not be aware of the goal that is anticipated, but after the reading/listening the goal is actually recognized as such, and s/he might retrospectively recognize the manner in which this goal is anticipated, an anticipation that s/he was not aware of before.

Feldman's *Rothko Chapel*, on the other hand, does not represent a clear goal at the end of the composition. Instead, this piece can be said to be narrative, and represent a temporal development, until bar 313 only. The remainder of the work is not narrative, for, although linearity is elicited, there is no clear goal anymore. It remains unclear which state or states are transformed during the course of this part of the composition.

Linearity and goal-directedness are made prominent in the separate sections of *Petals* as well, in which local developments are represented as a result of linearity and goal-directedness, for instance because of the interplay of consonance and dissonance. The work as a whole represents a development, and thus linearity and goal-directedness, too, as I outlined in the analysis above. The same is achieved in "Reigen seliger Geister" by representing the development of the interplay of musical and nonmusical sounds. *Anthèmes 2* evokes linearity as well, by the development of the almost dialogue-style interplay of acoustic and electronic sounds. Furthermore, in different movements material of earlier movements are repeated or varied, which provides clues for binding. Moreover, the piece represents a clear resolution at its ending. *Studie II* exhibits linearity and goal-directedness by making use of more or less conventional cadences which are sometimes anticipated, and sometimes not. *Désordre*, on the other hand, evokes linearity and goal-directedness by representing a building up of tension that is released at 0'51", followed by a section, which lasts until 1'22", that is unclear, and a final section in which clarity has returned, and that can be regarded as a goal, namely as a resolution of the preceding section.

The linearity and goal-directedness that are represented by these compositions are not straightforward. Instead, the music requires an active listener who cannot rely on established musical conventions such as tonality exclusively, in order to recognize these representations. Rather, it is because of the recognition of the musical contexts that are unique for that particular piece that linearity and goal-directedness can be anticipated, that the listener can plot his/her way through the music, and that the music can be bound.

Character/actor. One component that is very important in many verbal narratives is not explicitly featured in a musical metanarrative, namely character and its development. In verbal narratives, the process of narrativization is often, to a large extent, determined by this development. "When a character appears for the first time," Bal explains,

> […] we do not yet know very much about it. The qualities that are implied in that first presentation are not all "grasped" by the reader. In the course of the narrative the relevant characteristics are repeated so often – in a different form, however – that they emerge more clearly. Repetition is thus an

> important principle of the construction of the image of a character. (1997: 125)

In addition to repetition, the accumulation of a character's qualities during the course of the narrative, as well as the relations to other characters and the transformations the character might undergo contribute to the character's development (126). Obviously, this development happens over time, as the narrative unfolds. Gerrig and Egidi remark that

> […] experiments suggest that, as readers update their models, they are still – automatically – compelled to revisit the past. As such, the past and the present crowd together to give a nuanced sense of how a character has developed. (2003: 51)

During the reading, the reader compares new information with what s/he already gathered from earlier parts of the novel, and in so doing reconstructs the development of the novel's characters as represented in the narrative. Thus, by reading a narrative in this manner it is primarily regarded as a representation of the character's or characters' developments.

In my analysis of *Petals* I argued that the work could be characterized as narrative in several ways: as representing the development of the interplay of acoustic and electronic sounds, as a representation of the development of pitch turning from an unimportant factor at the beginning of the work into a principal actor during the course of the piece, and as the development of the tension between pitch and timbre. In all characterizations, the principal actors, i.e. timbre and pitch, play a leading role. In chapter 2, I defined a musical actor as a musical parameter that causes or undergoes an event, whereas a musical character consists of that parameter plus the values assigned to that parameter, thereby complying with Bal's definition of character, i.e. an actor provided with distinctive characteristics. In music, these characteristics are concrete values during a particular event, such as certain frequencies or decibel levels. This implies that in music actors can only be identified as soon as they become characters, i.e. specific instances during a musical event. In other words: a musical character acts as an index for a musical actor, which the listener cannot perceive directly. Therefore, I prefer to speak of the development of actors in *Petals*, rather than of the development of characters. Musical character is incidental, in contrast to the underlying musical parameter which is the musical actor. It is this parameter that develops, which is perceptible through the changing values of the musical character.

Actually, in music the listener cannot perceive anything but musical characters, since s/he can only get access to music through the

perception of musical parameters, which are embodied in musical characters. This is an important difference compared to verbal narratives, where fragments that do not feature characters are also possible. Often, these fragments are descriptions, which Bal considers to be non-narrative moments within the narrative, since in descriptions no development in time is presented (1997: 32). In contrast, musical narrative cannot contain fragments without characters.[7] Musical narrative is always established through the construction of character development, i.e. through the experience of the specific, concrete instances of the musical parameters that make up a musical piece. Via these musical characters the listener is able to identify events, s/he can establish contexts for a particular piece, by outlining the range of musical parameters within which musical events can be qualified, and recognize linearity and goal-directedness as a result of his/her ability to identify musical events. Therefore, an atonal musical narrative also tells about musical characters. Not directly, but by accounting for specific products of musical characters that enables the listener to comprehend the music in a narrative manner.

Focalization. Just as with musical characters, musical focalization is not expounded upon in any direct manner in an atonal musical narrative. Instead, as soon as this narrative is performed, it is at the same time focalized. As I explained in chapter 2, it is impossible to have a sounding musical narrative that is not focalized. For performance, which is a necessary element in the production of sounding music, always implies focalization, since the performance is the external focalizor.

Narrator. The musical narrator is a function that is posited in a musical work, as soon as this work is considered to be narrative, but is not assigned to the elements that are essential for the physical existence of the music. Thus, a musical narrator can only be assumed after the conclusion that a particular musical composition is narrative. Moreover, since in many cases the musical narrator is external and imperceptible, in these cases the conclusion that a musical work is narrative is the only clue the listener has for assuming a musical narrator. Nevertheless, in some instances, musical narratives can make the narrator more explicit, such as in "Reigen seliger Geister." As a result of the idiosyncrasies of this composition, i.e. the combination of conventional and unconventional musical sounds, this work makes explicit a perceptible first-person narrator that tells the story of its own making.

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[7] One could perhaps consider musical fragments in which no development is noticeable, such as the noise section in Andriessen's *Sweet for recorders*, as a musical equivalent of a verbal description. But this, then, would be a description which features a musical character, namely the parameter timbre.

The above elaboration of the narrative elements explains how a listener might be able to comprehend music – all kinds of music – through assuming a narrative listening stance. By recognizing a temporal development that is represented by one or more musical parameters of a musical work, the listener has a clear clue for structuring the music. This comprehension will always be limited, in the sense that the music still represents many dead ends or structural anomalies, which cannot be bound. However, this incompleteness is not necessarily a negative result of narrativization. On the contrary: incomplete comprehension might be one of the reasons a listener wants to listen again to a particular musical work. The work remains fascinating exactly because of these anomalies, while the re-listening of the music might lead to a less limited narrative comprehension of the piece.

Yet, in comprehending contemporary atonal music narratively, the listener not only has grasped the music, but s/he has also constructed a narrative that demonstrates the process of narrative comprehension. In other words: by comprehending an atonal musical work in a narrative manner the listener makes explicit how this is done. Hence, an atonal musical narrative is self-reflexive, but it is the narrative that is self-reflexive, rather than the music.[8] An atonal musical narrative does refer to extramusical phenomena, namely to that phenomenon called narrativity. Thus, paradoxically, exactly because atonal musical works are to a large extent idiosyncratic, those that are narrative all are about the same topic, i.e. narrativity itself. This topic can be told in many different ways, as the examples in this chapter have shown, and therefore they do not actually tell the same story. But the underlying theme is the same. One might argue that this is a rather reductionist view on atonal musical narrativity, a view that reduces all atonal musical narratives to the same topic. However, this theme can be considered as belonging to a more universal issue that contemporary atonal music addresses: the fact that music does not originate from some sort of natural order, but instead is a construction, a fabrication. Contemporary atonal music foregrounds this fact. Consequently, when assuming a narrative listening stance, atonal music makes the artificiality of this stance explicit as well. Musical narrativity is not presented as a representation of reality, but as a human construct. Hence, by assuming a narrative listening stance while listening to contemporary atonal music, the listener might learn at least two things: firstly, how to comprehend this kind of music, and, secondly, about the artificial nature of music and music listening.

[8] Again, tonal musical narratives might also be self-reflexive, although this is much more rare. Also, I would like to stress that the self-reflexivity of musical narrative is not the same as "music about music," which is a qualification that is given to many tonal and atonal works. A musical metanarrative is about narrativity, and thus is "music about narrativity."

CLOSURE

The comprehension of contemporary music through narrativization is a confirmation that idiosyncrasy can be grasped. It is a demonstration of the human facility to comprehend objects which are unique and, to a great extent at least, do not comply with established rules and conventions. Narrative analysis can articulate the ways human subjects may be able to comprehend such idiosyncratic phenomena. However, in narrative analysis the object is regarded as something that it, in itself, is not, i.e. a narrative. As Adorno puts it:

> No artwork is an undiminished unity; each must simulate it, and thus collides with itself. Confronted with an antagonistic reality, the aesthetic unity that is established in opposition to it immanently becomes a semblance. The integration of artworks culminates in the semblance that their life is precisely that of their elements. However, the elements import the heterogeneous into artworks and their semblance becomes apocryphal. In fact, every penetrating analysis of an artwork turns up fictions in its claim to aesthetic unity, whether on the grounds that its parts do not spontaneously cohere and that unity is simply imposed on them, or that the elements are prefabricated to fit this unity and are not truly elements. (1997: 138)

An artwork only pretends to be a unity, be it narrative or otherwise. Not intentionally, but rather as the result of the observer's urge to integrate the artwork's elements into a graspable whole. An analysis of the artwork's unity, however, exposes the fictionality of this unity. "A coherence of meaning – unity – is contrived by art," Adorno argues,

> […] because it does not exist and because as artificial meaning it negates the being-in-itself for the sake of which the organization of meaning was undertaken, ultimately negating art itself. Every artifact works against itself. (139)

An artwork evokes unity, yet in doing so undoes its true self. As a result, an artwork can only be apprehended by perceiving what it represents, and not by what it truly is. Likewise, the narrativization of contemporary music leads to a construction that is fabricated by the listener, and not to the exposure of the true essence of the music (whatever that may be). As a result, narrativization is a synthetic act, not an analytic one.

By regarding music as a narrative whole, one might argue that it is submitted to what Aldous Huxley calls the "reducing valve of the brain and nervous system" (1972: 16). In their everyday life human subjects focus on elements that proved to be essential to their survival, while

ignoring other elements. Consequently, they are only aware of a tiny fragment of what happens around them. As Huxley puts it:

> [E]ach one of us is potentially Mind at Large. But in so far as we are animals, our business is at all costs to survive. To make biological survival possible, Mind at Large has to be funneled through the reducing valve of the brain and nervous system. What comes out at the other end is a measly trickle of the kind of consciousness which will help us to stay alive on the surface of this particular planet. To formulate and express the contents of this reduced awareness, man has invented and endlessly elaborated those symbol-systems and implicit philosophies we call languages. (16-17)

The creation of narrative is a means to grasp what happens in our world. But it is at the same time a reduction of reality, and thus also a repression of what Huxley terms Mind at Large. Ricoeur (1985) has a similar view on the relation between human nature and narrative. He locates narrativity in the human soul as its fundamental way of comprehending the fact of death. Only by narrativizing death, which in Huxley's terms means submitting it to the reducing valve of the brain and nervous system, the human subject can come to terms with it.

In contrast, Huxley argues that apprehending the world through the concept of Mind at Large means to perceive the inner and outer world directly and unconditionally, not within the ruts of ordinary perception, not as they appear to "[…] an animal obsessed with survival or to a human being obsessed with words and notions" (1972: 58). So, Huxley would probably prefer trying to appreciate an artwork, such as music, not in a narrative manner, but in an unrestricted, direct way. Yet, how this can be accomplished he does not say. He does, however, acknowledge that it is very hard to achieve, as reduced awareness is such an innate characteristic of the human subject.

Huxley himself tried to apprehend the world through the concept of Mind at Large by taking, under medical supervision, a low dose of mescalin, a drug that reduces the sugar level of the brain. "When the brain runs out of sugar," Huxley explains,

> the undernourished ego grows weak, can't be bothered to undertake the necessary chores, and loses all interest in those spatial and temporal relationships which mean so much to an organism bent on getting on in the world. As Mind at Large weeps past the no longer watertight valve, all kinds of biologically useless things start to happen. (19)

The reduction of the sugar level in the brain reduces the efficiency of the reducing valve that the human brain normally is, allowing the Mind at Large to emerge.

Apprehending things by Mind at Large would result in seeing the things as they are, which is not as an imperfect reflection of Platonic

Ideas, but rather being as it is while in the process of becoming. Moreover, Huxley holds, viewing the world under the influence of mescalin resembles the way a true artist sees the world, as he reports while looking at paintings:

> What the rest of us see only under the influence of mescalin, the artist is congenitally equipped to see all the time. His perception is not limited to what is biologically of socially useful. A little of the knowledge belonging to Mind at Large oozes past the reducing valve of brain and ego into his consciousness. It is a knowledge or the intrinsic significance of every existent. (25)

Many theorists and composers would like music to be experienced in a manner that resembles Huxley's apprehension by Mind at Large. They are convinced that there are positive alternatives for "classical" listening stances in which the listener seeks for security, in the form of structure, in the music s/he is listening to. In my analysis of Feldman's *Rothko Chapel*, in chapter 3, I already mentioned the composer's ideal of creating music that does not comply with such stances. Stances that presuppose structure, with a narrative listening stance being one such stance, results in a framing of the music by focusing on some musical aspects and neglecting others, and thus in a restricted perception of the music.

The composer Francisco López strives at removing these restrictions. He remarks that

> [i]n my work with nature sound environments, I have moved away from the rationalizing and categorizing of these aural entities. I prefer this environmental perspective not because it is more "complete" or more "realistic" but because it encourages a perceptional shift from the recognition and differentiation of sound sources to the appreciation of the resulting sound matter. As soon as the call is in the air, it no longer belongs to the frog that produced it. (2004: 83)

López advocates a listening stance in which every attempt to link sound and source is eliminated. The listener just has to appreciate the sounds as they are. This listening stance is very similar to the concept of acousmatics, as proposed by the composer Pierre Schaeffer:

> Deliberately forgetting every reference to instrumental causes or preexisting musical significations, we then seek to devote ourselves entirely and exclusively to *listening*, to discover the instinctive paths that lead from the purely "sonorous" to the purely "musical." Such is the suggestion of acousmatics: to deny the instrument and cultural conditioning, *to put in front of us the sonorous and its musical "possibility."* (2004: 81, emphasis in original)

The emphasis in the concept of acousmatics is on the exploration of the musical possibilities of sounds, regardless of their origin. Moreover, the listener has to try to do away with a culturally conditioned approach when listening to music. As López puts it:

> [I]t is my belief that music is an aesthetic (in its widest sense) perception/ understanding/ conception of sound. It's our *decision* – subjective, intentional, non-universal, not necessarily permanent – that converts nature sounds into music. We don't need to transform or complement the sounds. Nor do we need to pursue a universal and permanent assignment. It will arise when our listening moves away and is freed from being pragmatically and representationally oriented. And attaining this musical state requires a profound listening, an immersion in the inside of sound matter. (2004: 87, emphasis in original)

Regarding sounds as musical sounds is an intentional act, López asserts. Moreover, when a listener listens to what s/he believes to be musical sounds, all kinds of conventions, beliefs, and habits are put into operation, such as, for instance, the belief that "[…] music must organize the intratemporal succession of events meaningfully: Each event should ensue from the previous one in a fashion that no more permits reversal than does time itself" (Adorno 1997: 30). In other words: the traditional classical belief is that music has to show musical causality and a high degree of linearity. Yet, as Adorno observes, "[…] the necessity of this temporal sequence was never literal; it participated in art's semblance character" (30). Music, at most, can be a representation of a linear temporal whole. Musical causation and linearity are never "really" in the music, but instead are read – heard – in the music by the listener.

López opposes a listening stance in which the linearity of music is presupposed. He advocates a listening stance with as few presuppositions as possible. Where contemporary music is concerned, Adorno argues along the same lines: "Today music rebels against conventional temporal order; in any case, the treatment of musical time allows for widely diverging solutions" (30). Contemporary music might be regarded as protests against consistency, or continuity. One could even go so far as to argue that contemporary music is an attempt to break through the biological predispositions of the listener, such as his/her efforts to comprehend the music s/he is listening to. Considered in this way, contemporary music complies with the listening stance as proposed by López.

Luigi Nono, too, strived to compose music that calls for a listening stance in which comprehension is not the aim. Rather, he wants his music to be listened to in a non-interpretative manner, i.e. listening to sounds instead of listening for that which the sounds refer to. Nono maintains that it is crucial to listen to a sound without trying to assign

any kind of meaning to it, other than the sound itself, as it appears in space and time (Broers 1999: 9). Thus, when it concerns listening to contemporary music, Nono and López, as well as other theorists and composers, reject a classical listening stance in which linearity and the striving for comprehension is presupposed, such as a narrative listening stance.

Yet, the stance these composers and theorists are aiming for can only be achieved at a cost. What seems lost in that stance is the interaction between the listener and the music. Instead, it appears as if the listener is expected to be just a passive receiver of the musical sounds. S/he is not allowed to do anything with it, for if s/he did, s/he would be interpreting these sounds, something a listener is not supposed to do. As a result, any creative input the listener might contribute to the listening process is denied.

In contrast, many other possible listening stances do allow for the creative input of the listener. A focus on sound fascination is an example of an active listening stance, and is particularly productive when it concerns contemporary music. This stance might resemble the one Nono and López advocate, but there is an important difference: a focus on sound fascination involves not only listening to sounds, but also their interpretation. In assuming this stance, Ligeti's *Ten Pieces for Wind Quintet*, for instance, might also be regarded as a study on the sonic possibilities of wind instruments, instead of as a collection of ten short studies on the ways in which plotting can be elicited or disturbed, as I did in chapter 4. However, this stance is not limited to contemporary music. One could, for instance, assume, to borrow a notion that Bal introduced, a "preposterous" listening stance (in the sense of a "before after" listening stance). This is a listening stance that is geared toward contemporary music, such as the focus on sound fascination, but is assumed when listening to older, classical music. As a result, the listener does not listen for linearity or goal-directedness in music of, say, Mozart, but for sounds, disregarding the forward motion this music might suggest.[1] As a matter of fact, I would regard Webern's orchestration (1935) of Johann Sebastian Bach's six-part fugue No. 2 from *Das musikalisches Opfer*, BWV 1079 (1747), and Salvatore Sciarrino's *Le voci sottovetro* (1999), which are adaptations of several of Carlo Gesualdo's vocal works that he composed in 1586

[1] Again, this is not to say that Mozart is only linear and goal-directed. For instance, in the first movement of his "Jupiter" Symphony No. 41 in C Major, K. 551 (1788), after a moment of complete silence a minor triad is played fortissimo. Since the context in which this chord appears is major, this is literally an unexpected moment. For an instant, all attention is absorbed by the sound and loudness of this chord. As a result, musical linearity is disturbed. Subsequently, the listener might try to fit this moment in the piece as a whole, for instance with the aid of the musical events that sound after the minor triad and which might enable the listener to recontextualize this moment.

and 1611, as instances in which this preposterous listening stance is made external. In these versions, musical linearity is suppressed in favor of an emphasis on sound.

A narrative listening stance, on the contrary, is an active stance that does focus on linearity. Narrativization is a fundamental human tendency in order to come to terms with temporal phenomena. It is a tendency that depends on both the narrative potentialities of a phenomenon and of an interpretative act of that phenomenon on the part of the human subject. As a result, a narrative listening stance, a stance in which the music is narrativized, explicitly calls for the active contribution of the listener in order to structure the music in time.

Consequently, to regard a musical work as a metanarrative is not a highly specific, exceptional instance of musical narrativity. On the contrary: a metanarrative is an articulation of the interaction between music and listener, and ultimately a demonstration of the fundamental human tendency to structure time in a narrative manner. Hence, metanarrative is a more general and inclusive model of narrativity, as opposed to the limited, restricted versions of musical narrativity that take verbal narrative as their model. One could even go so far as to claim that to regard music as a metanarrative is a more natural approach to musical narrativity. It is an articulation of the human subject's natural inclination to try to grasp the temporal nature of music. Narrative approaches to music which take verbal narrative as their model, on the other hand, are more artificial methods. These approaches are not based on narrativization as a natural human tendency, but on the extent to which music resembles a verbal narrative.

By assuming a narrative listening stance music, which in itself already is an artifact, is transformed into another artifact, namely a narrative. Yet, the interaction between listener and music that leads to this other artifact is based on a natural human tendency. Although Huxley may call this tendency a result of the reducing valve of the brain and nervous system, it is not necessarily as negative as Huxley considers it to be. Because of this reducing valve, the music itself might never be exposed to the listener in its entirety. When listening to music, the music is not perceived as it truly is, as Adorno observes as well, but is interpreted as a particular representation, for instance as a narrative. Yet, this view on music is not necessarily inferior to the complete, uninhibited apprehension of music that Huxley promotes. Apparently, he is more interested in the object called music itself, whereas I am more concerned with the interaction between listener and music. The narrative analysis of music focuses exactly on this interaction, and not on the essence or "truth" of the music itself. In the end, musical narrativity concerns the manner in which the human subject can cope with the temporal phenomenon called music.

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SUMMARY

Narrative is perhaps the most prevalent cultural object worldwide. The representation of some event that begins at a given time, and that is followed by the representation of other events, which together constitute some kind of temporal development, is an aspect of many things that the human subject encounters in life. Moreover, many theorists, such as David Herman, claim that human subjects have a basic inclination to interpret everything that they experience or undergo in a narrative manner. Therefore, these theorists argue, narratives are paramount in order to grasp the world in which the human subject lives.

Since music is a temporal cultural expression, it would seem to make sense to assume that music has a narrative aspect as well. Yet, there are theorists, such as Jean-Jacques Nattiez, who claim that narrativity can only be associated with verbal and visual texts, and they doubt the mere possibility of musical narrativity. However, I contend that music can indeed be narrative, and that the study of musical narrativity can be very productive. Moreover, I contend that contemporary music, too, can be narrative.

The purpose of the study of the narrative aspect of contemporary music in particular is twofold. Firstly, in so doing, I am able to articulate this narrative aspect in a precise manner. Since many contemporary musical works question or problematize the notion of musical narrativity, the analysis of these works might be the key to identifying the limits of musical narrativity. Secondly, I argue that, in assuming a narrative listening stance, the listener's comprehension of contemporary music might be enriched. As I mentioned above, narrative understanding is a basic disposition that human subjects share. Thus, I expect that a narrative interpretation of contemporary, atonal works may lead to a greater understanding of these works, which are often regarded as being incomprehensible or ungraspable by many listeners (and by many musicians and researchers alike). In short: I maintain that the study of the narrative aspect of contemporary music leads to a greater understanding of both musical narrativity and contemporary music. Yet, although I mainly focus on the analysis of contemporary, instrumental musical works, the results of this study, are valid for all kinds of music, thus for both instrumental and vocal music, classical and popular, ancient and contemporary.

In chapter 1, I examine what it means to grasp a musical composition. In particular, the problems regarding the grasp of contemporary, atonal music are addressed. (Western) listeners seem to

have no problem understanding tonal music, but seem unable to grasp atonal works. Contemporary, atonal music complicates musical comprehension, because it sometimes uses sounds that are not conventionally associated with music. Moreover, atonal music does not make use of established tonal conventions and musical forms, with which the listener is familiar, and this makes it more difficult to structure the music. I suggest that it might be possible to grasp this kind of music, as well as all other kinds of music, through narrative structuring, and that a narrative listening stance might help the listener in comprehending contemporary music.

Next, in chapter 2, I discuss what a musical narrative, i.e. a musical work that is narrativized by assuming a narrative listening stance, might be composed of. In order to do so, I examine the basic narrative elements that are distinguished in narratology, and explain how these can be modified, in order to come up with a musical narratology. The musical analyses in this chapter illustrate the ways in which narrative elements function in contemporary music, how contemporary musical compositions can tell musical stories, and in which sense these compositions might problematize these separate elements.

Since a narrative is a representation of a temporal development, and music necessarily is temporal, temporality is vital in both music and narrativity. Therefore, in chapter 3, I explore the relation between the representation of temporality in musical and verbal narrative, in order to see whether or not there are crucial differences between the two. In particular, I concentrate on the notion of what I call musical tense, which is the establishing of a relation between the unfolding of musical sounds (the musical present) and the representation of events (the musical past). As a consequence, musical tense is a prerequisite for the possibility of musical narrativity. For, in order to talk about a musical narrative, one has to be able to talk about musical events. A narrative without events is not possible. And musical tense exactly is the possibility music offers to represent events. As a result, a musical piece without musical tense cannot represent events and thus cannot be narrative. Therefore, musical tense is necessary for musical narrativity.

Narratives move towards certain goals. Narratives suggest some sense of motion, a sense of going in some direction. And music elicits this sense perhaps even stronger than verbal narrative does. Therefore, in chapter 4, I discuss the ways in which music can arouse this feeling of linearity and goal-directed motion within a narratological context. In order for music to elicit this impression during the listening, the listener must be able to plot his/her way through the music, i.e. being able to structure the music and distill some kind of meaning from it. I argue that this is only possible because of musical tense; would the music lack tense, then the listener would have no opportunity to structure and reflect on the music.

Eero Tarasti argues that musical narrativity emerges precisely from a series of emotions that are caused by the music itself. This would imply that musical emotion is a key ingredient in musical narrativity. In my account of musical narrativity, however, musical emotion does not play a central role. In chapter 5, I examine to what extent Tarasti's account is compatible with mine. Psychoanalysis might be a suitable approach to address this question. In this chapter I conclude that the recognition of discrete events is the cause of the fact that the music can evoke some sense of linearity and goal-directedness. It is the result of the listener's perception of an interplay of tension and resolution, and this interplay makes the listener react affectively to music. At the same time, the interplay of tension and resolution leads to the representation of a temporal development, and might ultimately result in musical narrativity. Thus, in the end, both musical narrativity and affective responses to music can be caused by the same phenomenon, i.e. the interplay of tension and resolution.

Psychoanalysis might also be useful to address the second question that is discussed in chapter 5: can a listener comprehend a musical piece that on the one hand elicits narrativity, but on the other hand frustrates the possibility of narrativity? In referring to trauma theory, in which the impossibility of closure and the resistance to narrative integration are discussed, I argue that this kind of music does not necessarily have to be ungraspable.

The narrative structuring of music results in a musical narrative. Yet, the question remains what this narrative is about. Since many theorists deny the possibility of musical narrativity exactly because they are convinced that there cannot exist a musical narrative content, this is an important question. Therefore, in chapter 6, I demonstrate that a musical narrative does have contents. In this chapter, I focus explicitly on the possible contents of atonal musical narratives, and contend that these musical narratives ultimately can be considered as metanarratives: they tell the story of the process of narrativization. Contemporary atonal musical narratives foregrounds the fact that music does not originate from some sort of natural order, but instead is a construction, a fabrication. Consequently, musical narrativity is not presented as a representation of reality, but as a human construct. Hence, by assuming a narrative listening stance while listening to contemporary atonal music, the listener might learn at least two things: firstly, how to comprehend this kind of music, and, secondly, about the artificial nature of music and music listening.

SAMENVATTING (SUMMARY IN DUTCH)

Het verhaal is wellicht het meest verspreide culturele object in de wereld. De representatie van een gebeurtenis die op een gegeven moment begint, en die wordt gevolgd door de representatie van andere gebeurtenissen, welke tezamen een temporele ontwikkeling vormen, is een aspect van veel dingen die het menselijk subject in zijn/haar leven tegenkomt. Bovendien stellen veel theoretici, zoals David Herman, dat subjecten een basale neiging hebben om alles wat zij ervaren of ondergaan op een narratieve wijze te interpreteren. Daarom, stellen deze theoretici, zijn verhalen cruciaal om vat te krijgen op de wereld waarin het subject leeft.

Aangezien muziek een temporele culturele uitdrukkingsvorm is, lijkt het aannemelijk dat muziek ook een narratief aspect heeft. Toch zijn er theoretici, zoals Jean-Jacques Nattiez, die beweren dat narrativiteit alleen met verbale en visuele teksten geassocieerd kan worden, en betwijfelen de mogelijkheid van zoiets als muzikale narrativiteit. Echter, ik stel dat muziek wel narratief kan zijn, en dat de studie van muzikale narrativiteit zeer productief kan zijn. Bovendien beargumenteer ik dat ook hedendaagse muziek narratief kan zijn.

Het doel van de studie naar het narratieve aspect van hedendaagse muziek is tweeledig. Ten eerste stelt juist de hedendaagse muziek mij in staat om dit narratieve aspect op een precieze wijze te articuleren. Aangezien veel hedendaagse werken de notie van muzikale narrativiteit problematiseren, kan de analyse van deze werken een manier zijn om de grenzen van muzikale narrativiteit te definiëren. Ten tweede beargumenteer ik dat het begrip van de luisteraar met betrekking tot hedendaagse muziek verrijkt kan worden wanneer hij/zij een narratieve luisterhouding aanneemt. Zoals ik hierboven heb opgemerkt, is narratief begrip een basale dispositie die gedeeld wordt door subjecten. Daarom verwacht ik dat een narratieve interpretatie van hedendaagse, atonale werken kan leiden tot een groter begrip van deze werken, die door luisteraars (en door veel musici en onderzoekers) vaak als onbegrijpelijk of onvatbaar worden beschouwd. Kortom: ik beargumenteer dat de studie naar het narratieve aspect van hedendaagse muziek tot een groter inzicht in zowel muzikale narrativiteit als in de hedendaagse muziek leidt. Maar, hoewel ik me voornamelijk richt op de analyse van hedendaagse, instrumentale muzikale werken, zijn de resultaten van deze studie geldig voor alle soorten muziek, dus zowel voor instrumentale als vocale muziek, klassiek en populair, oud en eigentijds.

In hoofdstuk 1 ga ik na wat het betekent om grip te krijgen op een muziekstuk. Ik richt me hier met name op het probleem van het vatten van hedendaagse, atonale muziek. (Westerse) luisteraars lijken geen probleem te hebben om tonale muziek te begrijpen, maar zijn klaarblijkelijk niet in staat om atonale werken te vatten. Hedendaagse, atonale muziek compliceert het muzikale begrip, omdat het soms geluiden gebruikt die niet conventioneel geassocieerd worden met muziek. Daarnaast maakt atonale muziek geen gebruik van gevestigde muzikale conventies en muzikale vormen waarmee de luisteraar bekend is, en dit maakt het moeilijker om deze muziek te structureren. Ik beargumenteer dat het mogelijk is om deze, en andere, muziek te vatten, door deze op een narratieve wijze te structureren, en dat een narratieve luisterhouding de luisteraar kan helpen om grip te krijgen op hedendaagse muziek.

Vervolgens, in hoofdstuk 2, bespreek ik waaruit een muzikaal verhaal, een muziekstuk dat is genarrativiseerd middels het aannemen van een narratieve luisterhouding, kan bestaan. Hiertoe richt ik mij op de basale narratieve elementen die worden onderscheiden in de narratologie, en leg ik uit hoe deze kunnen worden aangepast teneinde te komen tot een muzikale narratologie. De muziekanalyses in dit hoofdstuk laten zien op welke manieren narratieve elementen functioneren in hedendaagse muziek, hoe hedendaagse muziekstukken muzikale verhalen kunnen vertellen, en op welke manieren deze werken die afzonderlijke elementen kunnen problematiseren.

Aangezien een verhaal een representatie is van een temporele ontwikkeling, en muziek noodzakelijkerwijs temporeel is, is temporaliteit cruciaal in zowel muziek als narrativiteit. Daarom richt ik mij in hoofdstuk 3 op de relatie tussen de representatie van temporaliteit in muzikale en verbale verhalen, teneinde te onderzoeken of er belangrijke verschillen zijn tussen de twee. Ik concentreer me vooral op de notie die ik *musical tense* noem, wat de realisering van een relatie tussen het zich ontvouwen van muzikale geluiden (het muzikale heden) en de representatie van gebeurtenissen (het muzikale verleden) is. Daarom is *musical tense* een voorwaarde voor de mogelijkheid van muzikale narrativiteit. Want, teneinde over een muzikaal verhaal te kunnen praten, moet het mogelijk zijn om over muzikale gebeurtenissen te praten. Een verhaal zonder gebeurtenissen is niet mogelijk. En *musical tense* is precies de mogelijkheid die de muziek biedt om gebeurtenissen te representeren. Dit betekent dat een muziekstuk zonder *musical tense* geen gebeurtenissen kan representeren, en dus niet narratief kan zijn. Daarom is *musical tense* noodzakelijk voor een muzikaal verhaal.

Verhalen gaan op bepaald einddoelen af. Verhalen suggereren een gevoel van beweging, een gevoel van richting. En muziek suggereert dit gevoel wellicht zelfs sterker dan verbale verhalen. Daarom

bespreek ik in hoofdstuk 4 de manieren waarop muziek dit gevoel van lineariteit en doelgerichte beweging binnen een narratologische context kan oproepen. Om in staat te zijn deze indruk op te wekken moet de luisteraar in staat zijn zijn/haar weg door de muziek te "plotten," in andere woorden in staat te zijn om de muziek te structureren en een betekenis uit deze structuur te destilleren. Ik beweer dat dit alleen mogelijk is vanwege *musical tense*. Zou de muziek deze *tense* ontberen, dan zou de luisteraar niet in staat zijn om de muziek te structuren en te reflecteren over de muziek.

Eero Tarasti beweert dat muzikale narrativiteit ontstaat uit een reeks van emoties die worden veroorzaakt door de muziek zelf. Dit zou impliceren dat muzikale emoties een belangrijk ingrediënt zijn in muzikale narrativiteit. Echter, muzikale emoties spelen geen rol in mijn opvatting van muzikale narrativiteit. In hoofdstuk 5 ga ik na in hoeverre Tarasti's opvatting verenigbaar is met de mijne. De psychoanalyse lijkt een productieve benadering om deze vraag te beantwoorden. In dit hoofdstuk concludeer ik dat de herkenning van discrete gebeurtenissen de oorzaak is van het feit dat de muziek een gevoel van lineariteit en doelgerichtheid kan opwekken. Het is het gevolg van het feit dat de luisteraar een samenspel van spanning en ontspanning waarneemt, en dit samenspel zorgt ervoor dat de luisteraar op een affectieve wijze reageert op de muziek. Tegelijkertijd leidt dit samenspel tot de representatie van een temporele ontwikkeling en kan uiteindelijk resulteren in muzikale narrativiteit. Dus, uiteindelijk, kunnen zowel muzikale narrativiteit als de affectieve reacties op muziek veroorzaakt worden door hetzelfde fenomeen, namelijk het samenspel van spanning en ontspanning.

De psychoanalyse kan ook nuttig zijn bij het beantwoorden van de tweede vraag die centraal staat in hoofdstuk 5: kan een luisteraar grip krijgen op een muziekstuk dat aan de ene kant narrativiteit ontlokt, maar aan de andere kant de mogelijkheid tot narrativiteit frustreert? Door te verwijzen naar traumatheorie, waarin de onmogelijkheid tot afsluiting en de weerstand tegen narratieve integratie aan de orde komen, stel ik dat deze soort muziek niet noodzakelijkerwijs ongrijpbaar is.

De narratieve structurering van muziek resulteert in een muzikaal verhaal. Echter, de vraag is waar dit verhaal over gaat. Dit is een belangrijke vraag, aangezien veel theoretici de mogelijkheid van muzikale narrativiteit ontkennen omdat ze er juist van overtuigd zijn dat er niet zoiets bestaat als een muzikale narratieve inhoud. Daarom probeer ik in hoofdstuk 6 aan te tonen dat een muzikaal verhaal wel degelijk een inhoud heeft. In dit hoofdstuk richt ik mij met name op de mogelijke inhoud van atonale muzikale verhalen, en beweer ik dat deze muzikale verhalen uiteindelijk beschouwd kunnen worden als metaverhalen; zij vertellen het verhaal van het proces van

narrativisering. Hedendaagse atonale muzikale verhalen maken het feit dat muziek niet is ontstaan uit een natuurlijke orde, maar juist een constructie, een fabricatie is, expliciet. Als gevolg hiervan wordt muzikale narrativiteit niet gepresenteerd als een representatie van de realiteit, maar als een construct, gecreëerd door mensen. Dus, door het aannemen van een narratieve luisterhouding tijdens het luisteren naar atonale hedendaagse muziek kan de luisteraar ten minste twee dingen leren: ten eerste hoe deze muziek te kunnen vatten, en ten tweede leert hij/zij over de kunstmatige aard van muziek en van het luisteren ernaar.

CURRICULUM VITAE

Vincent Meelberg was born on 1 April 1970 in Lemgo, Germany. After finishing secondary school at the Stedelijk Gymnasium in Schiedam, the Netherlands, in 1989, he first started studying Electrical Engineering at the Delft University of Technology. Soon, however, he realized that a technological study did not exactly suit him, and the next year he switched in order to study Economic Law and Management at the HES School of Business and Economics Rotterdam. In 1994, he decided once again to change directions and tried to enroll in the Rotterdam Conservatory. He passed the entrance exam and studied Double Bass (Jazz) for two years. Finally, he graduated from the conservatory with a major in Classical Music Theory in 1997.

Although, at the time, he was pursuing a career as a performing musician, he nevertheless felt the urge to continue his theoretical studies, initially in order to improve his compositional skills. Yet, instead of studying Composition at the conservatory, he decided to study Musicology at Utrecht University. This proved to be a wise decision, for he graduated Cum Laude in 2001. He also started studying Philosophy at the same university in 1999, and received his M.A. in Philosophy, With Distinction, in 2004.

Meanwhile, in 2002, he was granted a PhD position at Leiden University, Department of Literary Studies. This enabled him to teach at the Department, to attend and present at several international conferences and symposia in Amsterdam (the Netherlands), Hanover (Germany), Melbourne (Australia), and Famagusta (North Cyprus), and to write his dissertation. In addition, he gave guest lectures at the University of Amsterdam, Maastricht University, the Free University Amsterdam, Groningen University, and the Radboud University Nijmegen.

Beside his academic activities, he remains active as a double bassist in several jazz and improvising groups (and the occasional pop gig), as well as a composer of the kind of music that is also the object of analysis in his dissertation. There does not exist a generally accepted term for this kind of music, but it is usually, and rather awkwardly, referred to as “contemporary classical.”